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ATHENS

ITS RISE AND FALL

WITH VIEWS OF THE

LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND SOCIAL LIFE

OF THE

ATHENIAN PEOPLE.

BY

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ATHENS:

ITS RISE AND FALL.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHARACTER AND POPULARITY OF MILTIADES—NAVAL EXPEDITION—SIEGE OF PAROS—CONDUCT OF MILTIADES—HE IS ACCUSED AND SENTENCED—HIS DEATH.

I. History is rarely more than the biography of great men. Through a succession of individuals we trace the character and destiny of nations. The People glide away from us, a sublime but intangible abstraction, and the voice of the mighty Agora reaches us only through the medium of its representatives to Posterity. The more democratic the state, the more prevalent this delegation of its history to the Few; since it is the prerogative of democracies to give the widest competition and the keenest excitement to individual genius: and the true spirit of democracy is dormant or defunct, when we find no one elevated to an intellectual throne above the rest. In regarding the characters of men thus concentrating upon themselves our survey of a nation, it is our duty sedulously to discriminate between their qualities and their deeds: for it seldom happens that their renown in life was unattended with reverses equally signal,—that the popularity of to-day was not followed by the persecution of to-morrow: and in these vicissitudes, our justice is no less appealed to than our pity, and we are called upon to decide, as judges, a grave and solemn cause between the silence of a departed People, and the eloquence of imperishable names.

We have already observed in the character of Miltiades that astute and calculating temperament common to most men whose lot it has been to struggle for precarious power in the midst of formidable foes. We have seen that his profound and scheming intellect was not accompanied by any very rigid or high-wrought principle; and placed, as the chief of the Chersonese had been from his youth upward, in situations of great peril and embarrassment, aiming always at supreme power, and, in his harassed and stormy domain, removed far from the public opinion of the free states of Greece, it was natural that his political code should have become tempered by a sinister ambition, and that the citizen of Athens should be actuated by motives scarcely more disinterested than those which animated the tyrant of the Chersonese. The ruler of one district may be the hero, but can scarcely be the patriot, of another. The long influence of years and custom—the unconscious deference to the opinion of those whom our youth has been taught to venerate, can alone suffice to tame down an enterprising and grasping mind to objects of public advantage, in preference to designs for individual aggrandizement: influence of such a nature had never operated upon the views and faculties of the hero of Marathon. Habituated to the enjoyment of absolute command, he seemed incapable of the duties of civil subordination; and the custom of a life urged him on to the desire of power.* These features of his character fairly considered, we shall see little to astonish us in the later reverses of Miltiades, and find additional causes for the popular suspicions he incurred.

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* "Cum consuetudine ad imperii cupiditatem trahi videretur."—Nepos in Vit. Milt. cap. 8.

II. But after the victory of Marathon, the power of Miltiades was at its height. He had always possessed the affection of the Athenians, which his manners as well as his talents contributed to obtain for him. Affable and courteous—none were so mean as to be excluded from his presence; and the triumph he had just achieved so largely swelled his popularity that the most unhesitating confidence was placed in all his suggestions.

In addition to the victory of Marathon, Miltiades, during his tyranny in the Chersonese, had gratified the resentment and increased the dominion of the Athenians. A rude tribe, according to all authority, of the vast and varied Pelasgic family, but essentially foreign to, and never amalgamated with, the indigenous Pelasgians of the Athenian soil, had in very remote times obtained a settlement in Attica. They had assisted the Athenians in the wall of their citadel, which confirmed, by its characteristic masonry, the general tradition of their Pelasgic race. Settled, afterwards, near Hymettus, they refused to blend with the general population—quarrels between neighbours so near, naturally ensued—the settlers were expelled, and fixed themselves in the Islands of Lemnos and Imbros—a piratical and savage horde. They kept alive their ancient grudge with the Athenians, and, in one of their excursions, landed in Attica, and carried off some of the women whilst celebrating a festival of Diana. These captives they subjected to their embraces, and ultimately massacred, together with the offspring of the intercourse. "The Lemnian Horrors" became a proverbial phrase—the wrath of the gods manifested itself in the curse of general sterility, and the criminal Pelasgi were commanded by the oracle to repair the heinous injury they had inflicted on the Athenians. The latter were satisfied with no atonement less than that of the surrender of the islands occupied by the offenders. Tradition thus reported the answer of the Pelasgi to so stern a demand—"Whenever one of your vessels in a single day, and with a northern wind, makes its passage to us, we will comply."

Time past on, the injury was unatoned, the remembrance remained—when Miltiades (then in the Chersonese) passed from Elæos in a single day, and with a north wind, to the Pelasgian Islands, avenged the cause of his countrymen, and annexed Lemnos and Imbros to the Athenian sway. The remembrance of this exploit had from the first endeared Miltiades to the Athenians, and since the field of Marathon, he united in himself the two strongest claims to popular confidence;—he was the deliverer from recent perils, and the avenger of hereditary wrongs.

The chief of the Chersonese was not slow to avail himself of the advantage of his position. He promised the Athenians a yet more lucrative, if less glorious enterprise than that against the Persians, and demanded a fleet of seventy ships, with a supply of men and money, for an expedition from which he assured them he was certain to return laden with spoil and treasure. He did not specify the places against which the expedition was to be directed; but so great was the belief in his honesty and fortune, that the Athenians were contented to grant his demand. The requisite preparations made, Miltiades set sail. Assuming the general right to punish those islands which had sided with the Persian, he proceeded to Paros, which had contributed a trireme to the armament of Datis. But beneath the pretext of national revenge, Miltiades is said to have sought the occasion to prosecute a selfish resentment. During his tyranny in the Chersonese, a Parian, named Lysagoras, had sought to injure him with the Persian government, and the chief now wreaked upon the island the retaliation due to an individual.

Such is the account of Herodotus—an account not indeed inconsistent with the vindictive passions still common to the inhabitants of the western clime, but certainly scarce in keeping with the calculating and politic character of Miltiades: for men go backward in the career of ambition when revenging a past offence upon a foe that is no longer formidable.

Miltiades landed on the island, laid vigorous siege to the principal city, and demanded from the inhabitants the penalty of a hundred talents. The besieged refused the terms, and worked day and night at the task of strengthening the city for defence. Nevertheless, Miltiades succeeded in cutting off all supplies, and the city was on the point of yielding;—when suddenly the chief set fire to the fortifications he had erected, drew off his fleet, and returned to Athens, not only without the treasure he had promised, but with an ignominious diminution of the glory he had already acquired. The most probable reason for a conduct* so extraordinary was, that by some accident a grove on the continent was set on fire—the flame, visible equally to the besiegers and the besieged, was interpreted alike by both: each party imagined it a signal from the Persian fleet—the one was dissuaded from yielding, and the other intimidated from continuing the siege. An additional reason for the retreat was a severe wound in the leg which Miltiades had received, either in the course of the attack, or by an accident he met with when attempting with sacrilegious superstition to consult the Infernal Deities on ground dedicated to Ceres.

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* Corn. Nepos in Vit. Milt. cap. 7.

III. We may readily conceive the amazement and indignation with which, after so many promises on the one side, and such unbounded confidence on the other, the Athenians witnessed the return of this fruitless expedition. No doubt, the wily and equivocal parts of the character of Miltiades, long cast in shade by his brilliant qualities, came now more obviously in view. He was impeached capitally by Xanthippus, an Athenian noble, the head of that great aristocratic faction of the Alcmæonids, which, inimical alike to the tyrant and the demagogue, brooked neither a master of the state, nor a hero with the people. Miltiades was charged with having accepted a bribe from the Persians,* which had induced him to quit the siege of Paros at the moment when success was assured.

The unfortunate chief was prevented by his wound from pleading his own cause—he was borne into the court stretched upon his couch, while his brother, Tisagoras, conducted his defence. Through the medium of his advocate Miltiades seems neither vigorously to have refuted the accusation of treason to the state, nor satisfactorily to have explained his motives for raising the siege. His glory was his defence; and the chief answer to Xanthippus was "Marathon and Lemnos." The crime alleged against him was of a capital nature; but despite the rank of the accuser, and the excitement of the audience, the people refused to pronounce sentence of death upon so illustrious a man. They found him guilty, it is true—but they commuted the capital infliction to a fine of fifty talents. Before the fine was paid, Miltiades expired of the mortification of his wound. The fine was afterwards paid by his son, Cimon. Thus ended a life full of adventure and vicissitude.

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* Nepos. in Vit. Milt. cap. 7.

The trial of Miltiades has often been quoted in proof of the ingratitude and fickleness of the Athenian people. No charge was ever more inconsiderately made. He was accused of a capital crime, *not* by the people, but by a powerful noble. The noble demanded his death—appears to have proved the charge—to have had the law, which imposed death, wholly on his side—and "the favour *of the people* it was," says Herodotus expressly, "which saved his life."* When we consider all the circumstances of the case—the wound to the popular vanity—the disappointment of excited expectation—the unaccountable conduct of Miltiades himself—and then see his punishment, after a conviction which entailed death, only in the ordinary assessment of a pecuniary fine,† we cannot but allow that the

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* Herod. lib. vi. cap. cxxxvi.

† Nepos says, the fine was estimated at the cost of the navy he had conducted to Paros; but Boeckh rightly observes, that it is an ignorant assertion of that author that the fine was intended for a compensation, being the usual mode of assessing the offence.

The case is simply this,—Miltiades was accused—whether justly or unjustly no matter—it was clearly as impossible not to receive the accusation, and to try the cause, as it would be for an English court of justice to refuse to admit a criminal action against Lord Grey or the Duke of Wellington. Was Miltiades guilty or not? This we cannot tell. We know that he was tried according to the law, and that the Athenians thought him guilty, for they condemned him. So far this is not ingratitude—it is the course of law. A man is tried and found guilty—if past services and renown were to save the great from punishment when convicted of a state offence, society would, perhaps, be disorganized, and certainly a free state would cease to exist. The question therefore shrinks to this—was it, or was it not ungrateful in the people to relax the penalty of death, legally incurred, and commute it to a heavy fine? I fear we shall find few instances of greater clemency in monarchies however mild. Miltiades

Athenian people, (even while vindicating the majesty of law, which in all civilized communities must judge offences without respect to persons,) were not, in this instance, forgetful of the services, nor harsh to the offences, of their great men.

unhappily died. But nature slew him, not the Athenian people. And it cannot be said with greater justice of the Athenians, than of a people no less illustrious, and who are now their judges, that it was their custom, "*de tuer un Amiral pour encourager les autres.*"

CHAPTER II.

THE ATHENIAN TRAGEDY—ITS ORIGIN—THESPIS—PHRYNICHU —ÆSCHYLUS—ANALYSIS OF THE TRAGEDIES OF ÆSCHYLUS.

BOOK III. CHAP. II.

I. From the melancholy fate of Miltiades, we are now invited to a subject no less connected with this important period in the history of Athens. The interval of repose which followed the battle of Marathon allows us to pause, and notice the intellectual state to which the Athenians had progressed since the tyranny of Pisistratus and his sons.

We have remarked the more familiar acquaintance with the poems of Homer which resulted from the labours and example of Pisistratus. This event, (for event it was,) combined with other causes,—the foundation of a public library, the erection of public buildings, and the institution of public gardens,—to create, with apparent suddenness, amongst a susceptible and lively population, a general cultivation of taste. The citizens were brought together in their hours of relaxation,* by the urbane and social manner of life, under porticos and in gardens, which it was the policy of a graceful and benignant tyrant to inculcate: and the native genius, hitherto dormant, of the quick Ionian race, once awakened to literary and intellectual objects, created an audience even before it found expression in a poet. The elegant effeminacy of Hipparchus contributed to foster the taste of the people—for the example of the great is nowhere more potent over the multitude, than in the cultivation of the arts. Patronage may not produce poets, but it multiplies critics. Anacreon and Simonides, introduced amongst the Athenians by Hipparchus, and enjoying his friendship, no doubt added largely to the influence which poetry began to assume. The peculiar sweetness of those poets, imbued, with harmonious contagion, the genius of the first of the Athenian dramatists, whose works, alas! are lost to us, though evidence of their character is preserved. About the same time, the Athenians must necessarily have been made more intimately acquainted with the various wealth of the lyric poets of Ionia and the isles. Thus it happened, that their models in poetry were of two kinds, the Epic and the Lyric, and in the natural connexion of art, it was but the next step to accomplish a species of poetry which should attempt to unite the two. Happily, at this time Athens possessed a man of true genius, whose attention early circumstances had directed to a rude and primitive order of histrionic recitation:—Phrynichus, the poet, was a disciple of Thespis, the mime: to him belongs this honour, that out of the elements of the broadest Farce he conceived the first grand combinations of the Tragic Drama.

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* The taste of a people, which is to art what public opinion is to legislation, is formed, like public opinion, by habitual social intercourse and collision. The more men are brought together to converse and discuss, the more the principles of a general, national taste will become both diffused and refined. Less to their climate, to their scenery, to their own beauty of form, than to their social habits and preference of the public to the domestic life, did the Athenians, and the Grecian republics generally, owe that wonderful susceptibility to the Beautiful and Harmonious, which distinguishes them above all nations, ancient or modern. Solitude may exalt the genius of a man, but communion alone can refine the taste of a people.

II. From time immemorial—as far back, perhaps, as the grove possessed an altar, and the waters supplied a reed for the pastoral pipe—

Poetry and Music had been dedicated to the worship of the gods of Greece. At the appointed season of festival to each several deity, His praises were sung, His traditionary achievements were recited. One of the divinities last introduced into Greece—the mystic and enigmatical Dionysos, or Bacchus, received the popular and enthusiastic adoration naturally due to the God of the Vineyard, and the "Unbinder of galling cares." His festival, celebrated at the most joyous of agricultural seasons,* was associated also with the most exhilarating associations. Dithyrambs, or wild and exulting songs, at first extemporaneous, celebrated the triumphs of the god. By degrees, the rude hymn swelled into prepared and artful measures, performed by a chorus that danced circling round the altar; and the dithyramb assumed a lofty and solemn strain, adapted to the sanctity of sacrifice and the emblematic majesty of the god. At the same time, another band (connected with the Phallic procession, which, however outwardly obscene, betokened only, at its origin, the symbol of fertility, and betrays the philosophy of some alien and eastern creed*) implored in more lively and homely strains the blessing of the prodigal and jovial deity. These ceremonial songs received a wanton and wild addition, as, in order, perhaps, more closely to represent and personify the motley march of the Liber Pater, the chorus-singers borrowed from the vine-browsing goat which they sacrificed, the hides and horns, which furnished forth the merry mimicry of the Satyr and the Faun. Under license of this disguise, the songs became more obscene and grotesque, and the mummers vied with each other in obtaining the applause of the rural audience by wild buffoonery and unrestricted jest. Whether as the prize of the winner, or as the object of sacrifice, the goat (*tragos* in the Greek) was a sufficiently important personage to bestow upon the exhibition the homely name of TRAGEDY, or GOAT-SONG, destined afterwards to be exalted by association with the proudest efforts of human genius.

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* It seems probable that the principal Bacchic festival was originally held at the time of the vintage—*condita post frumenta*. But from the earliest known period in Attica, all the triple Dionysia were celebrated during the winter and the spring.

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* Egyptian, according to Herodotus, who asserts, that Melampus first introduced the Phallic symbol amongst the Greeks, though he never sufficiently explained its mysterious significations, which various sages since his time had, however, satisfactorily interpreted. It is just to the Greeks to add, that this importation, with the other rites of Bacchus, was considered at utter variance with their usual habits and manners.

And, while the DITHYRAMB, yet amidst the Dorian tribes, retained the fire and dignity of its hereditary character—while in Sicyon it rose in stately and mournful measures to the memory of Adrastus, the Argive hero—while in Corinth, under the polished rule of Periander, Arion imparted to the antique hymn a new character and a more scientific music,*—gradually, in Attica, it gave way before the familiar and fantastic humours of the satyrs, sometimes abridged to afford greater scope to their exhibitions—sometimes contracting the contagion of their burlesque. Still, however, the reader will observe, that the *tragedy*, or *goat-song*, consisted of two parts—first, the exhibition of the mummers, and, secondly, the dithyrambic chorus, moving in a circle round the altar of Bacchus. It appears on the whole most probable, though it is a question of fierce dispute and great uncertainty, that not only this festive ceremonial, but also its ancient name of tragedy, or goat-song, had long been familiar in Attica,† when, about B.C. 535, during the third tyranny of Pisistratus, a skilful and ingenious native of Icaria, an Attic village in which the Eleutheria, or Bacchic rites, were celebrated with peculiar care, surpassed all competitors in the exhibition of these rustic entertainments.

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* Herodotus asserts that Arion *first* named, invented, and taught the dithyramb at Corinth, but, as Bentley triumphantly observes, Athenæus has preserved to us the very verses of Archilochus, his predecessor by a century, in which the song of the dithyramb is named.

† In these remarks upon the origin of the drama, it would

belong less to history than to scholastic dissertation, to enter into all the disputed and disputable points. I do not, therefore, pause with every step to discuss the questions contested by antiquarians—such as, whether the word 'tragedy,' in its primitive and homely sense, together with the prize of the goat, was or was not known in Attica prior to Thespis; (it seems to me that the least successful of Bentley's immortal work is that which attempts to enforce the latter proposition;) still less do I think a grave answer due to those who, in direct opposition to authorities headed by the grave and searching Aristotle, contend that the exhibitions of Thespis were of a serious and elevated character. The historian must himself weigh the evidences on which he builds his conclusions, and come to those conclusions, especially in disputes which bring to unimportant and detached inquiries the most costly expenditure of learning, without fatiguing the reader with a repetition of all the arguments which he accepts or rejects. For those who incline to go more deeply into subjects connected with the early Athenian drama, works by English and German authors, too celebrated to enumerate, will be found in abundance. But even the most careless general reader will do well to delight himself with that dissertation of Bentley on Phalaris, so familiar to students, and which, despite some few intemperate and bold assumptions, will always remain one of the most colossal monuments of argument and erudition.

He relieved the monotonous pleasantries of the Satyric Chorus by introducing, usually in his own person, a histrionic tale-teller, who from an elevated platform, and with the lively gesticulations common still to the popular narrators of romance on the Mole of Naples, or in the bazaars of the East, entertained the audience with some mythological legend. It was so clear that during this recital the Chorus remained unnecessarily idle and superfluous, that the next improvement was as natural in itself, as it was important in its consequences. This was to make the Chorus assist the narrator by occasional question or remark.

The Choruses themselves were improved in their professional art by Thespis. He invented dances, which for centuries retained their popularity on the stage, and is said to have given histrionic disguise to his reciter—at first, by the application of pigments to the face; and afterwards, by the construction of a rude linen mask.

III. These improvements, chiefly mechanical, form the boundary to the achievements of Thespis. He did much to create a stage—little to create *tragedy*, in the proper acceptation of the word. His performances were still of a ludicrous and homely character, and much more akin to the comic than the tragic. Of that which makes the essence of the solemn drama of Athens—its stately plot, its gigantic images, its prodigal and sumptuous poetry, Thespis was not in any way the inventor. But PHRYNICHUS, the disciple of Thespis, was a *poet*; he saw, though perhaps dimly and imperfectly, the new career opened to the art, and he may be said to have breathed the immortal spirit into the mere mechanical forms, when he introduced *poetry* into the bursts of the chorus and the monologue of the actor. Whatever else Phrynichus effected is uncertain. The developed plot—the introduction of regular dialogue through the medium of a second actor—the pomp and circumstance—the symmetry and climax of the drama—do not appear to have appertained to his earlier efforts; and the great artistical improvements which raised the simple incident to an elaborate structure of depicted narrative and awful catastrophe, are ascribed, not to Phrynichus, but Æschylus. If the later works of Phrynichus betrayed these excellencies, it is because Æschylus had then become his rival, and he caught the heavenly light from the new star which was destined to eclipse him. But everything essential was done for the Athenian tragedy when Phrynichus took it from the Satyr and placed it under the protection of the Muse—when, forsaking the humours of the rustic farce, he selected a solemn subject from the serious legends of the most vivid of all mythologies—when he breathed into the familiar measures of the chorus the grandeur and sweetness of the lyric ode—when, in a word, taking nothing from Thespis, but the stage and the performers, he borrowed his tale from Homer and his melody from Anacreon. We must not, then, suppose, misled by the vulgar accounts of the Athenian drama, that the contest for the goat, and the buffooneries of Thespis, were its real origin: born of the epic and the lyric song, Homer gave it character, and the lyrists language. Thespis and his predecessors only suggested the form to which the new-born poetry should be applied.

IV. Thus under Phrynichus the Thespian drama rose into *poetry*, worthy to exercise its influence upon poetical emulation, when a young man of noble family and sublime genius, rendered, perhaps, more thoughtful and profound by the cultivation of a mystical philosophy,* which had lately emerged from the primitive schools of Ionian wisdom, brought to the rising art the united dignity of rank, philosophy, and genius. Æschylus, son of Euphorion, born at Eleusis, B. C. 525, early saturated a spirit naturally fiery and exalted with the vivid poetry of Homer. While yet a boy, and probably about the time when Phrynichus first elevated the Thespian drama, he is said to have been inspired by a dream with the ambition to excel in the dramatic art. But in Homer he found no visionary revelation to assure him of those ends, august and undeveloped, which the actor and the chorus might be made the instruments to effect. For when the idea of scenic representation was once familiar, the epics of Homer suggested the true nature of the drama. The great characteristic of that poet is *individuality*. Gods or men alike have their separate, unmistakeable attributes and distinctions—they converse in dialogue—they act towards an appointed end. Bring Homer on the stage, and introduce two actors instead of a narrator, and a drama is at once effected. If Phrynichus from the first borrowed his story from Homer, Æschylus, with more creative genius, and more meditative intellect, saw that there was even a richer mine in the vitality of the Homeric spirit—the unity of the Homeric designs. Nor was Homer, perhaps, his sole though his guiding inspiration. The noble birth of Æschylus no doubt gave him those advantages of general acquaintance with the poetry of the rest of Greece, which an education formed under the lettered dynasty of the Pisistratidæ would naturally confer upon the well-born. We have seen that the dithyramb, debased in Attica to the Thespian chorus, was in the Dorian states already devoted to sublime themes, and enriched by elaborate art; and Simonides, whose elegies, peculiar for their sweetness, might have inspired the 'ambrosial' Phrynichus, perhaps gave to the stern soul of Æschylus, as to his own pupil Pindar, the model of a loftier music, in his dithyrambic odes.

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* Æschylus was a Pythagorean. "Veniat Æschylus, sed etiam Pythagoreus."—Cic. Tusc. Dis. b. ii. 9.

V. At the age of twenty-five, the son of Euphorion produced his first tragedy. This appears to have been exhibited in the year after the appearance of Aristagoras at Athens,—in that very year so eventful and important, when the Athenians lighted the flames of the Persian war amidst the blazing capital of Sardis. He had two competitors in Pratinas and Chœrilus. The last, indeed, preceded Phrynichus, but merely in the burlesques of the rude Thespian stage; the example of Phrynichus had now directed his attention to the new species of drama, but without any remarkable talent for its cultivation. Pratinas, the contemporary of Æschylus, did not long attempt to vie with his mighty rival in his own line.* Recurring to the old satyr-chorus, he reduced its unmeasured buffooneries into a regular and systematic form; he preserved the mythological tale, and converted it into an artistical burlesque. This invention, delighting the multitude, as it adapted an ancient entertainment to the new and more critical taste, became so popular that it was usually associated with the graver tragedy; when the last becoming a solemn and gorgeous spectacle, the poet exhibited a trilogy (or three tragedies) to his mighty audience, while the satyric invention of Pratinas closed the whole, and answered the purpose of our modern farce.† Of this class of the Grecian drama but one specimen remains, in the Cyclops of Euripides. It is probable that the birth, no less than the genius, of Æschylus enabled him with greater facility to make the imposing and costly additions to the exhibition, which the nature of the poetry demanded—since, while these improvements were rapidly proceeding, the poetical fame of Æschylus was still uncrowned. Nor was it till the fifteenth year after his first exhibition that the sublimest of the Greek poets obtained the ivy chaplet, which had succeeded to the goat and the ox, as the prize of the tragic contests. In the course of a few years, a regular stage, appropriate scenery and costume, mechanical inventions and complicated stage machinery, gave fitting illusion to the representation of gods and men. To the monologue of Phrynichus, Æschylus added a second actor;* he curtailed the choruses, connected them with the main story, and, more important

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* Out of fifty plays, thirty-two were satyrical.—Suidas in Prat.

† The Tetralogy was the name given to the fourfold exhibition of the three tragedies, or trilogy, and the Satyric Drama.

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* Yet in Æschylus there are sometimes more than two *speaking* actors on the stage,—as at one time in the Choëphori, Clytemnestra, Orestes, Electra, (to say nothing of Pylades, who is silent,) and again in the same play, Orestes, Pylades, and Clytemnestra; also in the Eumenides, Apollo, Minerva, Orestes. It is truly observed, however, that these plays were written after Sophocles had introduced the third actor.[1] Any number of mutes might be admitted, not only as guards, &c. but even as more important personages. Thus, in the Prometheus, the very opening of the play exhibits to us the demons of Strength and Force, the god Vulcan, and Prometheus himself; but the dialogue is confined to Strength and Vulcan.

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[1] The Orestean tetralogy was exhibited B.C. 458, only two years before the death of Æschylus, and ten years after Sophocles had gained his first prize.

than all else, reduced to simple but systematic rules, the progress and development of a poem, which no longer had for its utmost object to please the ear, or divert the fancy, but swept on its mighty and irresistible march, to besiege passion after passion, and spread its empire over the whole soul.

An itinerant platform was succeeded by a regular theatre of wood—the theatre of wood by a splendid edifice, which is said to have held no less an audience than thirty thousand persons.* Theatrical contests became a matter of national and universal interest. These contests occurred thrice a year, at three several festivals of Bacchus.† But it was at the great Dionysia, held at the end of March and commencement of April, that the principal tragic contests took place. At that period, as the Athenian drama increased in celebrity, and Athens herself in renown, the city was filled with visitors, not only from all parts of Greece, but almost from every land in which the Greek civilization was known. The state took the theatre under its protection, as a solemn and sacred institution. So anxious were the people to consecrate wholly to the Athenian name the glory of the spectacle, that at the great Dionysia no foreigner, nor even any metœcus, (or alien settler,) was permitted to dance in the choruses. The chief archon presided over the performances; to him was awarded the selection of the candidates for the prize. Those chosen were allowed three actors* by lot and a chorus, the expense of which was undertaken by the state, and imposed upon one of the principal persons of each tribe, called choragus. Thus, on one occasion, Themistocles was the choragus to a tragedy by Phrynichus. The immense theatre, crowded by thousands, tier above tier, bench upon bench, was open to the heavens, and commanded, from the sloping hill on which it was situated, both land and sea. The actor apostrophized no mimic pasteboard, but the wide expanse of Nature herself—the living sun, the mountain air, the wide and visible Ægæan. All was proportioned to the gigantic scale of the theatre, and the mighty range of the audience. The form was artificially enlarged and heightened; masks of exquisite art and beauty brought before the audience the ideal images of their sculptured gods and heroes, while (most probably) mechanical inventions carried the tones of the voice throughout the various tiers of the theatre. The exhibitions took place in the open day, and the limited length of the plays permitted the performance of probably no less than ten or twelve before the setting of the sun. The sanctity of their origin, and the mythological nature of their stories, added something of religious solemnity to these spectacles, which were opened by ceremonial sacrifice. Dramatic exhibitions, at least for a considerable period, were not, as with us, made hacknied by constant repetition. They were as rare in their recurrence as they were imposing in their effect; nor was a drama, whether tragic or comic, that had gained the prize, permitted a second time to be exhibited. A special exemption was made in favour of Æschylus, afterwards extended to Sophocles and Euripides. The general rule was necessarily stimulant of renewed and unceasing exertion, and was, perhaps, the principal cause of the almost miraculous fertility of the Athenian dramatists.

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* The celebrated Temple of Bacchus; built after the wooden theatre had given way beneath the multitude assembled to witness a contest between Pratinas and Æschylus.

† 1st. The rural Dionysia, held in the country districts throughout Attica, about the beginning of January. 2nd. The Lenæan, or Anthesterial, Dionysia, in the end of February and beginning of March, in which principally occurred the comic contests; and the grand Dionysia of the city, referred to in the text. Afterwards dramatic performances were exhibited also, in August, during the Panathenæa.

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* That is when *three* actors became admitted on the stage.

VI. On the lower benches of the semi-circle sat the archons and magistrates, the senators and priests; while apart, but in seats equally honoured, the gaze of the audience was attracted, from time to time, to the illustrious strangers whom the fame of their poets and their city had brought to the Dionysia of the Athenians. The youths and women* had their separate divisions; the rest of the audience were ranged according to their tribes, while the upper galleries were filled by the miscellaneous and impatient populace.

In the orchestra, (a space left by the semicircular benches, with wings stretching to the right and left before the scene,) a small square platform served as the altar, to which moved the choral dances, still retaining the attributes of their ancient sanctity. The coryphæus, or leader of the chorus, took part in the dialogue as the representative of the rest, and, occasionally, even several of the number were excited into exclamations by the passion of the piece. But the principal duty of the Chorus was to diversify the dialogue by hymns and dirges, to the music of flutes, while, in dances far more artful than those now existent, they represented by their movements the emotions that they sung,[*] —thus bringing, as it were, into harmony of action the poetry of language. Architectural embellishments of stone, representing a palace, with three entrances, the centre one appropriated to royalty, the others to subordinate rank, usually served for the scene. But at times, when the plot demanded a different locality, scenes painted with the utmost art and cost were easily substituted; nor were wanting the modern contrivances of artificial lightning and thunder—the clouds for the gods—a variety of inventions for the sudden apparition of demon agents, whether from above or below,—and all the adventitious and effective aid which mechanism lends to genius.

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* For it is sufficiently clear that women were admitted to the tragic performances, though the arguments against their presence in comic plays preponderate. This admitted, the manners of the Greeks may be sufficient to prove that, as in the arena of the Roman games, they were divided from the men; as, indeed, is indirectly intimated in a passage of the Gorgias of Plato.

VII. Thus summoning before us the external character of the Athenian drama, the vast audience, the unroofed and enormous theatre, the actors themselves enlarged by art above the ordinary proportions of men, the solemn and sacred subjects from which its form and spirit were derived, we turn to Æschylus, and behold at once the fitting creator of its grand and ideal personifications. I have said that Homer was his original; but a more intellectual age than that of the Grecian epic had arrived, and with Æschylus, philosophy passed into poetry. The dark doctrine of Fatality imparted its stern and awful interest to the narration of events—men were delineated, not as mere self-acting and self-willed mortals, but as the agents of a destiny inevitable and unseen—the gods themselves are no longer the gods of Homer, entering into the sphere of human action for petty motives, and for individual purposes—drawing their grandeur, not from the part they perform, but from the descriptions of the poet;—they appear now as the oracles or the agents of Fate—they are visitors from another world, terrible and ominous from the warnings which they convey. Homer is the creator of the Material poetry, Æschylus of the Intellectual. The corporeal and animal sufferings of the Titan in the Epic hell become

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[*] Schlegel says truly and eloquently of the Chorus—"that it was the idealized spectator"—" reverberating to the actual spectator a musical and lyrical expression of his own emotions."

BOOK III. CHAP. II.

exalted by Tragedy into the portrait of moral Fortitude defying physical Anguish. The Prometheus of Æschylus is the spirit of a god disdainfully subjected to the misfortunes of a man. In reading this wonderful performance, which in pure and sustained sublimity is perhaps unrivalled in the literature of the world, we lose sight entirely of the cheerful Hellenic worship; and yet it is in vain that the learned attempt to trace its vague and mysterious metaphysics to any old symbolical religion of the East. More probably, whatever theological system it shadows forth, was rather the gigantic conception of the poet himself, than the imperfect revival of any forgotten creed, or the poetical disguise of any existent philosophy. However this be, it would certainly seem, that, in this majestic picture of the dauntless enemy of Jupiter, punished only for his benefits to man, and attracting all our sympathies by his courage and his benevolence, is conveyed something of disbelief or defiance of the creed of the populace—a suspicion from which Æschylus was not free in the judgment of his contemporaries, and which is by no means inconsonant with the doctrines of Pythagoras.

VIII. The conduct of the fable is as follows:—Two vast demons, Strength and Force, accompanied by Vulcan, appear in a remote plain of earth,—an unpeopled desert. There, on a sterile and lofty rock, hard by the sea, Prometheus is chained by Vulcan—"a reward for his disposition to be tender to mankind." The date of this doom is cast far back in the earliest dawn of time, and Jupiter has but just commenced his reign. While Vulcan binds him, Prometheus utters no sound—it is Vulcan, the agent of his punishment, that alone complains. Nor is it till the dread task is done, and the ministers of Jupiter have retired, that "the god, unawed by the wrath of gods,' bursts forth with his grand apostrophe—

"O Air divine! O ye swift-winged Winds—
Ye sources of the Rivers, and ye Waves,
That dimple o'er old Ocean like his smiles—
Mother of all—O Earth! and thou the orb,
All-seeing, of the Sun, behold and witness
What I, a god, from the stern gods endure.

* * * * *

When shall my doom be o'er?—Be o'er!—to me
The Future hides no riddle—nor can woe
Come unprepared! It fits me then to brave
That which must be: for what can turn aside
The dark course of the grim Necessity?"

While thus soliloquizing, the air becomes fragrant with odours, and faintly stirs with the rustling of approaching wings. The Daughters of Ocean, aroused from their grots below, are come to console the Titan. They utter many complaints against the dynasty of Jove. Prometheus comforts himself by the prediction that the Olympian shall hereafter require his services, and that, until himself released from his bondage, he will never reveal to his tyrant the danger that menaces his realm; for the vanquished is here described as of a mightier race than the victor, and to him are bared the mysteries of the future, which to Jupiter are denied. The triumph of Jupiter is the conquest of brute force over knowledge.

Prometheus then narrates how, by means of his counsels, Jupiter had gained his sceptre, and the ancient Saturn and his partisans been whelmed beneath the abyss of Tartarus—how he alone had interfered with Jupiter to prevent the extermination of the human race, (whom *alone the celestial king disregarded and condemned*)—how he had imparted to them fire, the seed of all the arts, and exchanged in their breasts the terrible knowledge of the future, for the beguiling flatteries of hope: and hence his punishment.

At this time Ocean himself appears: he endeavours unavailingly to persuade the Titan to submission to Jupiter. The great spirit of Prometheus, and his consideration for others, are beautifully individualized in his answers to his consoler, whom he warns not to incur the wrath of the tyrant, by sympathy with the afflicted. Alone again with the Oceanides, the latter burst forth in fresh strains of pity.

BOOK III. CHAP. II.

"The wide earth echoes wailingly,
Stately and antique were thy fallen race,
The wide earth waileth thee!
Lo! from the holy Asian dwelling-place,
Fall for a godhead's wrongs, the mortals' murmuring tears,
They mourn within the Colchian land,
The virgin and the warrior daughters,
And far remote, the Scythian band,
Around the broad Mæotian waters,
And they who hold in Caucasus their tower,
Arabia's martial flower
Hoarse-clamouring 'midst sharp rows of barbed spears.

One have I seen with equal tortures riven—
An equal god;—in adamantine chains
Ever and evermore
The Titan Atlas, crush'd, sustains
The mighty mass of mighty Heaven,
And the whirling cataracts roar,

BOOK III. CHAP. II.

With a chime to the Titan's groans,
And the depth that receives them moans;
And from vaults that the earth are under,
Black Hades is heard in thunder;
While from the founts of white-waved rivers flow
Melodious sorrows, wailing with his woe."

Prometheus, in his answer, still farther details the benefits he had conferred on men—he arrogates to himself their elevation to intellect and reason.* He proceeds darkly to dwell on the power of Necessity, guided by "the triform fates and the unforgetful Furies," whom he asserts to be sovereign over Jupiter himself. He declares that Jupiter cannot escape his doom: "His doom," ask the daughters of Ocean, "is it not evermore to reign?"—"That thou mayst not learn," replies the prophet; "and in the preservation of this secret depends my future freedom."

The rejoinder of the chorus is singularly beautiful, and it is with a pathos not common to Æschylus that they contrast their present mournful strain with that which they poured

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* In this speech he enumerates, amongst other benefits, that of Numbers, 'the prince of wise inventions'—one of the passages in which Æschylus is supposed to betray his Pythagorean doctrines.

"What time the silence erst was broken,
Around the baths, and o'er the bed
To which, won well by many a soft-love token,
And hymn'd by all the music of delight,
Our Ocean-sister, bright
Hesione, was led!"

At the end of this choral song appears Io, performing her mystic pilgrimage.* The utter woe and despair of Io are finely contrasted with the stern spirit of Prometheus. Her introduction gives rise to those ancestral and traditionary allusions to which the Greeks were so attached. In prophesying her fate, Prometheus enters into much beautiful descriptive poetry, and commemorates the lineage of the Argive kings. After Io's departure, Prometheus renews his defiance to Jupiter, and his stern prophecies, that the son of Saturn shall be "hurled from his realm, a forgotten king." In the midst of these weird denunciations, Mercury arrives, charged by

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* It is greatly disputed whether Io was represented on the stage as transformed into the actual shape of a heifer, or merely accursed with a visionary frenzy, in which she believes in the transformation. It is with great reluctance that I own it seems to me not possible to explain away certain expressions without supposing that Io appeared on the stage at least partially transformed.

Jupiter to learn the nature of that danger which Prometheus predicts to him. The Titan bitterly and haughtily defies the threats and warnings of the herald, and exults, that whatever be his tortures, he is at least *immortal*,—to be afflicted, but not to die. Mercury at length departs—the menace of Jupiter is fulfilled—the punishment is consummated—and, amidst storm and earthquake, both rock and prisoner are struck by the lightnings of the god into the deep abyss.

> "The earth is made to reel, and rumbling by,
> Bellowing it rolls, the thunder's gathering wrath!—
> And the fierce fires glare livid; and along
> The rocks the eddies of the sands whirl high,
> Borne by the hurricane, and all the blasts
> Of all the winds leap forth—each hurtling each—
> Met in the wildness of a ghastly war,
> The dark floods blended with the swooping heaven.
> It comes—it comes!—on me it speeds—the Storm,
> The rushing onslaught of the Thunder-god;
> O, majesty of earth—my solemn mother!
> And thou that through the universal void,
> Circlest sweet light, all blessing;—EARTH AND ETHER,
> YE, I invoke, to know the wrongs I suffer."

IX. Such is the conclusion of this unequalled drama, epitomized somewhat at undue length, in order to show the reader how much the philosophy that had awakened in the age of Solon now actuated the creations of poetry. Not that Æschylus, like Euripides, deals in didactic sentences and oracular aphorisms. He rightly held such pedantries of the closet, foreign to the tragic genius.* His philosophy is in the spirit, and not the diction of his works—in vast conceptions, not laconic maxims. He does not preach, but he inspires. The "Prometheus" is perhaps the greatest moral poem in the world—sternly and loftily intellectual—and, amidst its darker and less palpable allegories, presenting to us the superiority of an immortal being to all mortal sufferings. Regarded merely as poetry, the conception of the Titan of Æschylus has no parallel except in the Fiend of Milton. But perhaps the representation of a benevolent spirit afflicted, but not accursed—conquered, but not subdued by a power, than which it is elder, and wiser, and loftier, is yet more sublime than that of an evil demon writhing under the penance deservedly incurred from an irresistible God. The one is intensely moral—at once the more moral and the more tragic, because the sufferings are *not* deserved, and therefore the defiance commands our sympathy as well as our awe: but the other is but the picture of a righteous doom, borne by a despairing though stubborn will; it affords no excitement to our courage, and forbids at once our admiration and our pity.

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* Vit. Æsch.

X. I do not propose to conduct the reader at length through the other tragedies of Æschylus;—seven are left to us, to afford the most striking examples which modern or ancient literature can produce of what perhaps is the true theory of the SUBLIME, viz. the elevating the imagination by means of the passions, for a moral end.

Nothing can be more grand and impressive than the opening of the "Agamemnon," with the solitary watchman on the tower, who for ten long years has watched nightly for the beacon fires that are to announce the fall of Ilion, and who now beholds them blaze at last. The description which Clytemnestra gives of the progress of these beacon fires from Troy to Argos is, for its picturesque animation, one of the most celebrated in Æschylus. The following lines will convey to the general reader a very inadequate reflection, though not an unfaithful paraphrase, of this splendid passage.*

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* It is the orthodox custom of translators to render the

Clytemnestra has announced to the Chorus the capture of Troy. The Chorus, half incredulous, demand what messenger conveyed the intelligence. Clytemnestra replies—

A gleam—a gleam—from Ida's height,
By the Fire-god sent, it came;—
From watch to watch it leapt that light,
As a rider rode the Flame!
It shot through the startled-sky,
And the torch of that blazing glory
Old Lemnos caught on high,
On its holy promontory,
And sent it on, the jocund sign,
To Athos, Mount of Jove divine.
Wildly the while, it rose from the isle,
So that the might of the journeying Light
Skimmed over the back of the gleaming brine!
Farther and faster speeds it on,
Till the watch that keep Macistus steep—
See it burst like a blazing Sun!
Doth Macistus sleep
On his tower-clad steep?
No! rapid and red doth the wild fire sweep;

dialogue of the Greek plays in blank verse, but in this instance the whole animation and rapidity of the original would be utterly lost in the stiff construction and protracted rhythm of that metre.

It flashes afar, on the wayward stream
Of the wild Euripus, the rushing beam!
It rouses the light on Messapion's height,
And they feed its breath with the withered heath.
But it may not stay!
And away—away—
It bounds in its freshening might.

Silent and soon,
Like a broadened moon,
It passes in sheen, Asopus green,*
And bursts on Cithæron grey!
The warder wakes to the Signal-rays,
And it swoops from the hill with a broader blaze,
On—on the fiery Glory rode—
Thy lonely lake, Gorgōpis, glowed—
To Megara's Mount it came;
They feed it again,
And it streams amain—
A giant beard of Flame!
The headland cliffs that darkly down
O'er the Saronic waters frown,
Are pass'd with the Swift One's lurid stride,
And the huge rock glares on the glaring tide,
With mightier march and fiercer power
It gained Arachne's neighbouring tower—

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* Viz. the meadows around Asopus. † Ægiplancton.

BOOK III. CHAP. II.

Thence on our Argive roof its rest it won,
Of Ida's fire the long-descended Son!
Bright Harbinger of glory and of joy!
So first and last with equal honour crown'd,
In solemn feasts the race-torch circles round.—
And these my heralds!—this my SIGN OF PEACE;
Lo! while we breathe, the victor lords of Greece,
Stalk, in stern tumult, through the halls of Troy!"*

In one of the earlier choruses, in which is introduced an episodical allusion to the abduction of Helen, occurs one of those soft passages so rare in Æschylus, nor less exquisite than rare. The Chorus suppose the minstrels of Menelaus thus to lament the loss of Helen:

"And woe the halls, and woe the chiefs,
And woe the bridal bed!—
And woe her steps—for once she loved
The lord whose love she fled!
Lo! where, dishonour yet unknown,
He sits—nor deems his Helen flown,

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* To make the sense of this detached passage more complete, and conclude the intelligence which the queen means to convey, the concluding line in the text is borrowed from the next speech of Clytemnestra—following immediately after a brief and exclamatory interruption of the Chorus.

Tearless and voiceless on the spot;
All desert, but he feels it not!
Ah! soon alive, to miss and mourn
The form beyond the ocean borne
Shall start the lonely king!
And thought shall fill the lost one's room,
And darkly through the palace gloom
Shall stalk a ghostly thing.*
Her statues meet, as round they rise,
The leaden stare of lifeless eyes.
Where is their ancient beauty gone?—
Why loathe his looks the breathing stone?
Alas! the foulness of disgrace,
Hath swept the Venus from her face!
And visions in the mournful night,
Shall dupe the heart to false delight,
A false and melancholy;
For nought with sadder joy is fraught,
Than things at night by dreaming brought,
The Wish'd for and the Holy.
Swift from the solitary side,
The Vision and the Blessing glide,
Scarce welcomed ere they sweep,
Pale, bloodless, dreams, aloft
On wings unseen and soft,
Lost wanderers gliding through the paths of Sleep."

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* *i. e.* Menelaus, made by grief like the ghost of his former self.

But the master-terror of this tragedy is in the introduction of Cassandra, who accompanies Agamemnon, and who, in the very hour of his return, amidst the pomp and joy that welcome the " king of men," is seized with the prophetic inspiration, and shrieks out those ominous warnings, fated ever to be heard in vain. It is she who recalls to the Chorus, to the shuddering audience, that it is the house of the long-fated Atridæ, to which their descendant has returned—" that human shamble house—that bloody floor—that dwelling, abhorred by Heaven, privy to so many horrors against the most sacred ties ;" the doom yet hangs over the inexpiable threshold, the curse passes from generation to generation ; Agamemnon is the victim of his sires.

Recalling the inhuman banquet served by Atreus to Thyestes of his own murdered children, she starts from the mangled spectres on the threshold :

" See ye those infants crouching by the floor,
Like phantom dreams, pale nurslings, that have perish'd
By kindred hands."

Gradually her ravings become clear and clearer, until at last she scents the ' blood-dripping slaughter within,' a vapour rises to her nostrils as from a charnel house—her own fate, which she foresees at hand, begins to overpower her—her mood softens, and she enters the palace, about to become her tomb, with thoughts in which frantic terror has yielded to solemn and pathetic resignation:

> " Alas for mortals!—what their power and pride?
> A little shadow sweeps it from the earth!
> And if they suffer—why, the Fatal Hour
> Comes o'er the record like a moistened sponge,
> And blots it out; *methinks this latter lot*
> *Affects me deepest—Well! 'tis pitiful!*[*]

Scarcely has the prophetess withdrawn than we hear behind the scene the groans of the murdered king, the palace behind is opened, and

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[*] The words in Italics attempt to convey paraphrastically a new construction of a sentence which has puzzled the commentators, and met with many and contradictory interpretations. The original literally is—" I pity the last the most." Now, at first it is difficult to conjecture why those whose adversity is over, " blotted out with the moistened sponge," should be the most deserving of compassion. But it seems to me that Cassandra applies the sentiments to herself—*She* pities those whose career of grief is over, because it is her own lot which she commiserates, and by reference to which she individualizes a general reflection.

Clytemnestra is standing, stern and lofty, by the dead body of her lord. The critics have dwelt too much on the character of Clytemnestra—it is that of Cassandra which is the masterpiece of the tragedy.

XI. The story, which is spread throughout three plays (forming a complete trilogy,) continues in the opening of the Choephori, with Orestes mourning over his father's tomb. If Clytemnestra has furnished would-be critics with a comparison with Lady Macbeth for no other reason than that one murdered her husband, and the other persuaded her husband to murder somebody else; so Orestes may with more justice be called the Hamlet of the Greeks; but though the character itself of Orestes is not so complex and profound as that of Hamlet, nor the play so full of philosophical beauties as the modern tragedy, yet it has passages equally pathetic, and more sternly and terribly sublime. The vague horror which in the commencement of the play prepares us for the catastrophe by the dream of Clytemnestra—how a serpent lay in swaddling clothes like an infant, and she placed it in her breast, and it drew blood;—the brief and solemn answer of Orestes—

> "Man's visions never come to him in vain;"—

the manner in which the avenging parricide interrupts the dream, so that (as in Macbeth) the prediction inspires the deed that it foretells; the dauntless resolution of Clytemnestra, when she hears, in the dark sayings of her servant, that "the dead are slaying the living," (*i. e.* that through the sword of Orestes, Agamemnon is avenged on Ægisthus,) calls for a weapon, royal to the last, wishing only to

> "Know which shall be the victor or the vanquished—
> Since that the crisis of the present horror;"—

the sudden change from fierce to tender as Orestes bursts in, and thinking only of her guilty lover, she shrieks forth,

> "Ah! thou art then no more, beloved Ægisthus;"—

the advance of the threatening son, the soft apostrophe of the mother as she bares her bosom—

> "Hold! and revere this breast on which so oft
> Thy young cheek nestled—cradle of thy sleep,
> And fountain of thy being;"—

the recoil of Orestes—the remonstrance of Pylades—the renewed passion of the avenger—

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the sudden recollection of her dream, which the murderess scarcely utters than it seems to confirm Orestes to its fulfilment, and he pursues and slays her by the side of the adulterer;—all these passages are full of so noble a poetry, that I do not think the parallel situations in Hamlet equal their sustained and solemn grandeur. But the sublimest effort of the imagination is in the conclusion. While Orestes is yet justifying the deed that avenged a father, strange and confused thoughts gradually creep over him. *No eyes see them but his own*—there they are, "the Gorgons, in vestments of sable, their eyes dropping loathly blood!" Slowly they multiply, they approach, still invisible but to their prey—"the angry hell-hounds of his mother." He flies, the fresh blood yet dripping from his hands. This catastrophe—the sudden apparition of the Furies ideally imaged forth to the parricide alone—seems to me greater in conception than the supernatural agency in Hamlet. The visible ghost is less awful than the unseen Furies.

The plot is continued through the third piece of the trilogy, (the Eumenides,) and out of Æschylus himself, no existing tragedy presents so striking an opening—one so terrible and so picturesque. It is the temple of Apollo at

Delphi. The priestess, after a short invocation, enters the sacred edifice, but suddenly returns. "A man," she says, "is at the marble seat, a suppliant to the god—his bloody hands hold a drawn sword, and a long branch of olive. But around the man sleep a wondrous and ghastly troop, not of women, but of things womanlike, yet fiendish; harpies they seem, but are not;—black-robed and wingless, and their breath is loud and baleful, and their eyes drop venom—and their garb is neither meet for the shrines of God, nor the habitations of men. Never have I seen, (saith the Pythian,) a nation which nurtured such a race." Cheered by Apollo, Orestes flies while the dread Sisters yet sleep;—and now within the temple we behold the Furies scattered around, and a pale and lofty shape, the ghost of Clytemnestra, gliding on the stage, awakens the agents of her vengeance. They break forth as they rouse themselves, "Seize—seize—seize." They lament—they bemoan the departure of their victim, they expostulate with Apollo, who expels them from his temple. The scene changes; Orestes is at Athens, he pleads his cause before the temple of Minerva. The contest is now shared by gods; Apollo and the Furies are the pleaders—Pallas is the umpire, the Areopagites are the judges. Pallas casts in her vote in favour of Orestes—the lots are equal—he is absolved;—the Furies, at first enraged, are soothed by Minerva, and, invited to dwell in Athens, pour blessings on the land. A sacred but joyous procession crowns the whole. Thus the consummation of the trilogy is cheerful, though each of the two former pieces is tragic; and the poet artfully conduces the poem to the honour of his native Athens, and the venerable Areopagus.

Regarding the three as one harmonious and united performance, altogether not so long as one play of Shakspeare's, they are certainly not surpassed in greatness of thought, in loftiness of conception, and in sustained vigour of execution, by any poem in the compass of literature; nor, observing their simple but compact symmetry as a whole, shall we do right to subscribe to those who deny to Æschylus the skill of the artist, while they grant him the faculty of the poet. The ingenious Schlegel attributes to these tragedies symbolical interpretations, but to my judgment with signal ill-success. These four tragedies—the Prometheus, the Agamemnon, the Choephori, and the Eumenides, are in grandeur immeasurably superior to the remaining three.

XII. Of these last, the Seven against Thebes is the best. The subject was one peculiarly interesting to Greece; the War of the Seven was the earliest record of a league amongst the Grecian princes, and of an enterprise carried on with a regular and systematic design. The catastrophe of two brothers falling by each other's hand is terrible and tragic, and amongst the most national of the Grecian legends. The fierce and martial spirit of the warrior poet runs throughout the play; his descriptions are animated as with the zeal and passion of battle; the chorus of Theban virgins paint in the most glowing colours the rush of the adverse hosts—the prancing of the chargers—the sound of their hoofs, "rumbling as a torrent lashing the side of cliffs;" we hear the creak of the heavy cars—the shrill whiz of the javelins, "maddening the very air"—the showers of stones crashing over the battlements—the battering at the mighty gates—the uproar of the city—the yells of rapine—the shrieks of infants "strangled by the bubbling blood." Homer himself never accumulated more striking images of horror. The description of Tydeus is peculiarly Homeric—

> "Three shadowy crests, the honours of his helm,
> Wave wild, and shrilly from his buckler broad

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The brazen bells ring terror. On the shield
He bears his haughty ensign—typed by stars
Gleaming athwart the sky, and in the midst
Glitters the royal Moon—the Eye of Night.
Fierce in the glory of his arms, his voice
Roars by the river banks; and drunk with war
He pants, as some wild charger, when the trump
Clangs ringing, as he rushes on the foe."

The proud, dauntless, and warlike spirit of Eteocles, which is designed and drawn with inconceivable power, is beautifully characterised in his reply to the above description:

"Man hath no armour, war hath no array,
At which this heart can tremble;—no device
Nor blazonry of battle can inflict
The wounds they menace;—crests and clashing bells
Without the spear, are toothless, and the night,
Wrought on yon buckler with the stars of heaven,
Prophet, perchance, his doom; and if dark Death
Close round his eyes, are but the ominous signs
Of the black night that waits him."

The description of each warrior stationed at each gate is all in the genius of Homer, closing as it does with that of Polynices, the brother of the besieged hero, whom, when he hears his name, Eteocles himself resolves to confront. At first, indeed, the latter breaks out into exclamations which denote the awe and struggle of the abhorrent nature; forebodings of his own doom flit before him, he feels the curses of his sire are ripening to their fruit, and that the last storm is yet to break upon the house of Œdipus. Suddenly he checks the impulse, sensible of the presence of the Chorus. He passes on to reason with himself, through a process of thought which Shakspeare could not have surpassed. He conjures up the image of that brother, hateful and unjust from infancy to boyhood, from boyhood up to youth—he assures himself that justice would be forsworn if this foe should triumph—and rushes on to his dread resolve.

> "'Tis I will face this warrior: who can boast
> A right to equal mine? Chief against chief—
> Foe against foe—and brother against brother.
> What, ho! my greaves, my spear, my armour proof
> Against this storm of stones! My stand is chosen."

Eteocles and his brother both perish in the unnatural strife, and the tragedy ends with the decree of the senators to bury Eteocles with due honours, and the bold resolution of Antigone (the sister of the dead) to defy the ordinance which forbids a burial to Polynices—

"For mighty is the memory of the womb
From which alike we sprung—a wretched mother!"

The same spirit which glows through the "Seven against Thebes," is also visible in the "Persians," which, rather picturesque than dramatic, is tragedy brought back to the dithyrambic ode. It portrays the defeat of Xerxes, and contains one of the most valuable of historical descriptions, in the lines devoted to the battle of Salamis. The speech of Atossa, (the mother of Xerxes,) in which she enumerates the offerings to the shade of Darius, is exquisitely beautiful.

——— "The charms that soothe the dead:
White milk, and lucid honey, pure-distill'd
By the wild bee—that craftsman of the flowers;
The limpid droppings of the virgin fount,
And this bright liquid from its mountain mother
Borne fresh—the joy of the time-hallowed vine;—
The pale-green olive's odorous fruit, whose leaves
Live everlastingly—and these wreathed flowers,
The smiling infants o' the prodigal earth."

Nor is there less poetry in the invocation of the

Chorus to the shade of Darius, which slowly rises as they conclude. But the purpose for which the monarch returns to earth is scarcely sufficient to justify his appearance, and does not seem to be in accordance with the power over our awe and terror which the poet usually commands. Darius hears the tale of his son's defeat—warns the Persians against interfering with the Athenians—tells the mother to comfort and console her son—bids the chorus (who disregard his advice) give themselves to mirth, even though in affliction, "for to the dead riches are no advantage"—and so returns to his repose, which seems very unnecessarily disturbed.

"The Suppliants," which Schlegel plausibly conjectures to have been the intermediate piece of a trilogy, is chiefly remarkable as a proof of the versatility of the poet. All horror has vanished from the scene; the language is soft when compared with the usual diction of Æschylus; the action is peaceful, and the plot extremely simple, being merely the protection which the daughters of Danaus obtain at the court of Pelasgus from the pursuit of the sons of Ægyptus. The heroines of the play, the Danaides, make the chorus, and this serves to render the whole, yet more than the Persians, a lyric rather than a tragedy. The moral of the play is homely and primitive, and seems confined to the inculcation of hospitality to strangers, and the inviolable sanctity of the shrine. I do not know any passages in "The Suppliants" that equal in poetry the more striking verses of "The Persians," or "The Seven against Thebes."

XIII. Attempts have been made to convey to modern readers a more familiar notion of Æschylus by comparisons with modern poets. One critic likens him to Dante, another to Milton—but he resembles neither. No modern language can convey a notion of the wonderful strength of his diction—no modern poet, of the stern sublimity of his conceptions. The French tragedians may give some weak reflection of Euripides or even of Sophocles, but none have ventured upon the sacred territory of the Father of the tragic drama. He defies all imitation. His genius is so near the verge of bombast, that to approach his sublime is to rush into the ridiculous.*

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* Perhaps his mere diction would find a less feeble resemblance in passages of Shelley, especially in the Prometheus of that poet, than in any other poetry existent. But his diction alone. His power is in concentration—the quality of Shelley is diffuseness. The interest excited by Æschylus, even to those who can no longer sympathize with the ancient associations, is startling, terrible, and intense—that excited by

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Æschylus never once, in the plays that have come down to us, delineates love, except by an expression or two as regards the passion of Clytemnestra for Ægisthus.* It was emblematic of a new state of society when Euripides created the Phædra and the Medea. His plots are worked out by the simplest and the fewest positions. But he had evidently his own theory of art, and studied with care such stage effects as appeared to him most striking and impressive. Thus, in the burlesque contest between Æschylus and Euripides, in the comedy of "The Frogs," the former is censured, not for too rude a neglect, but for too elaborate a cultivation, of theatrical craft—such as introducing his prin-

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Shelley is lukewarm and tedious. The intellectuality of Shelley destroyed, that of Æschylus only increased, his command over the passions.

* In the comedy of "The Frogs," Aristophanes makes it the boast of Æschylus, that he never drew a single woman influenced by love. Spanheim is surprised that Aristophanes should ascribe such a boast to the author of the "Agamemnon." But the love of Clytemnestra for Ægisthus *is* never drawn—never delineated. It is merely suggested and hinted at,—a sentiment lying dark and concealed behind the motives to the murder of Agamemnon ostensibly brought forward, viz. revenge for the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and jealousy of Cassandra.

cipal characters, his Niobe and Achilles,* with their faces hid, and preserving long and obstinate silence, in order by that suspense to sharpen the expectation of the audience. Æschylus, in fact, contrary to the general criticism, was as earnest and thoughtful an artist as Sophocles himself. There was this difference, it is true; one invented the art and the other perfected. But the first requires as intense a study as the last; and they who talk of the savage and untutored genius of Æschylus, are no wiser than the critics who applied the phrase of "native wood-notes wild" to the consummate philosophy of "Hamlet," the anatomical correctness of "Othello," the delicate symmetry of "The Tempest." With respect to the language of Æschylus, ancient critics unite with the modern in condemning the straining of his metaphors, and the exaggeration of his images; yet they appear to me a necessary part of his genius, and of the effect it produces. But nothing can be more unsatisfactory and inconclusive than the theory of Schlegel, that such metaphors and images, such rugged boldness and irregular fire, are the characteristics of a literature in its infancy. On the contrary, as we have already seen, Phrynichus, the predecessor of Æschylus, was as much characterised by sweetness and harmony, as Æschylus by grandeur and headlong animation. In our own time, we have seen the cold classic school succeeded by one full of the faults which the German, eloquent but superficial, would ascribe to the infancy of literature. The diction of Æschylus was the distinction of himself and not of his age; if it require an apology, let us not seek it in false pretences; if he had written after Euripides, his diction would have been equally startling, and his metaphors equally lofty. His genius was one of those which, in any age, can form an era, and not that which an era necessarily forms. He might have enriched his music from the strains of the Dorian lyres, but he required only one poet to have lived before him. The rest of the Greek dramatists required Æschylus—Æschylus required only Homer.

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* In plays lost to us.

The POET is, indeed, the creator, not of images solely, but of men—not of one race of ideas and characters, but of a vast and interminable posterity scattered over the earth. The origin of what wonderful works, in what distant regions, in what various time, may be traced, step by step, from influence to influence, till we arrive at Homer! Such is the vitality of genius. The true spiritual transmigrator—it passes through all shapes—losing identity but not life—and kindred to the GREAT INTELLIGENCE, which is the soul of matter—departing from one form only to animate another.

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CHAPTER III.

ARISTIDES—HIS CHARACTER AND POSITION—THE RISE OF THEMISTOCLES—ARISTIDES IS OSTRACISED—THE OSTRACISM EXAMINED—THE INFLUENCE OF THEMISTOCLES INCREASES—THE SILVER MINES OF LAURION—THEIR PRODUCT APPLIED BY THEMISTOCLES TO THE INCREASE OF THE NAVY—NEW DIRECTION GIVEN TO THE NATIONAL CHARACTER.

I. WHILE the progress of the drama, and the genius of Æschylus, contributed to the rising renown of Athens, there appeared on the surface of her external affairs two rival and principal actors, of talents and designs so opposite, that it soon became evident, that the triumph of one could be only in the defeat of the other.

Before the battle of Marathon, Aristides had attained a very considerable influence in Athens. His birth was noble—his connexions wealthy—his own fortune moderate. He had been an early follower and admirer of Clisthenes, the establisher of popular institutions in Athens after the expulsion of the Pisistratidæ, but he shared the predilections of many popular chieftains, and while opposing the encroachments of a tyranny, supported the power of an aristocracy. The system of Lycurgus was agreeable to his stern and inflexible temper. His integrity was republican—his loftiness of spirit was patrician. He had all the purity, the disinterestedness, and the fervour of a patriot—he had none of the suppleness or the passion of a demagogue; on the contrary, he seems to have felt much of that high-spirited disdain of *managing* a people which is common to great minds conscious that they are serving a people. His manners were austere, and he rather advised than persuaded men to his purposes. He pursued no tortuous policy, but marched direct to his object, fronting, and not undermining, the obstacles in his path. His reputation for truth and uprightness was proverbial, and when some lines in Æschylus were recited on the stage, implying that "to *be*, and not to seem, his wisdom was," the eyes of the spectators were fixed at once upon Aristides. His sternness was only for principles—he had no harshness for men. Priding himself on impartiality between friends and foes, he pleaded for the very person whom the laws obliged him to prosecute; and when once, in his capacity of arbiter between two private persons, one of the parties said that his opponent had committed many injuries against Aristides, he rebuked him nobly: "Tell me not," he said, "of injuries against myself, but against thee. It is thy cause I am adjudging, and not my own." It may be presumed, that with these singular and exalted virtues, he did not seek to prevent the wounds they inflicted upon the self-love of others, and that the qualities of a superior mind were displayed with the bearing of a haughty spirit. He became the champion of the aristocratic party, and before the battle of Marathon, held the office of public treasurer. In this capacity Plutarch asserts that he was subjected to an accusation by Themistocles, and even intimates that Themistocles himself had been his predecessor in that honourable office.* But the youth of Themistocles contradicts this statement, and though his restless and ambitious temper had led him already into active life, and he might have combined with others more influential against Aristides, it can scarcely be supposed that, possessing no advantages of birth, he rose into much power or distinction, till he won sudden and popular applause by his gallantry at Marathon.

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* I reject the traditions which make Aristides and Themistocles rivals as boys, because chronology itself refutes them. Aristides must have been of mature age at the battle of Marathon, if he was the friend and follower of Clisthenes, one of the ten generals in the action, and archon in the following year. But both Plutarch and Justin assure us that Themistocles was very young at the battle of Marathon, and this assurance is corroborated by other facts connected with his biography. He died at the age of sixty-five, but he lived to

II. Themistocles was of illegitimate birth, according to the Athenian prejudice, since his mother was a foreigner. His father, though connected with the priestly and high-born house of the Lycomedæ, was not himself an Eupatrid. The young Themistocles had many of the qualities which the equivocal condition of illegitimacy often educes from active and stirring minds—insolence, ostentation, the desire to shine, and the invincible ambition to rise. He appears, by a popular tale, to have early associated with his superiors, and to have evinced betimes the art and address which afterwards distinguished him. At a meeting of all the illegitimate youths assembled at the wrestling ring at Cynosarges, dedicated to Hercules, he persuaded some of the

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see the siege of Cyprus by Cimon. This happened B.C. 449. If then, we refer his death to that year, he was born 514 B.C., and therefore was about twenty-four at the battle of Marathon.

young nobles to accompany him, so as to confound as it were the distinction between the Legitimate and the Base-born. His early disposition was bold, restless, and impetuous. He paid little attention to the subtleties of schoolmen, or the refinements of the arts; but even in boyhood devoted himself to the study of politics, and the arts of government. He would avoid the sports and occupations of his schoolfellows, and compose declamations, of which the subject was the impeachment or defence of some of his young friends. His dispositions prophesied of his future career, and his master was wont to say, "that he was born to be a blessing or a curse to the commonwealth." His strange and precocious boyhood was followed by a wild and licentious youth. He lived in extremes, and alternated between the loosest pleasures* and the most daring ambition. Entering prematurely into public life, either his restless disposition or his political principles embroiled him with men of the highest rank. Fearless and sanguine, he cared not whom he attacked, or what he adventured; and, whatever his conduct before the battle of Marathon, the popular opinions he embraced could not but bring him, after that event, in constant opposition to Aristides, the champion of the Areopagus.

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* Plut. in Vit. Them. Heraclides et Idomeneus ap. Athen. lib. 12.

That splendid victory which gave an opening to his career, sharpened his ambition. The loud fame of Miltiades, yet unconscious of reverse, inspired him with a lofty envy. He seems from that period to have forsaken his more youthful excesses. He abstained from his wonted pursuits and pleasures—he indulged much in solitary and abstracted thought—he watched whole nights. His friends wondered at the change, and inquired the cause. "The trophies of Miltiades," said he, "will not suffer me to sleep." From these meditations, which are common to most men in the interval between an irregular youth and an aspiring manhood, he soon seems to have awakened with fixed objects and expanded views. Once emerged from the obscurity of his birth, his success was rapid, for he possessed all the qualities which the people demand in a leader—not only the talents and the courage, but the affability and the address. He was an agreeable and boon companion—he committed to memory the names of the humblest citizens—his versatility enabled him to be all things to all men. Without the lofty spirit and beautiful mind of Pericles, without the prodigal but effeminate graces of Alcibiades—

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without, indeed, any of their Athenian poetry in his intellectual composition, he yet possessed much of their powers of persuasion, their ready talent for business, and their genius of intrigue. But his mind, if coarser than that of either of his successors, was yet perhaps more masculine and determined; nothing diverted him from his purpose—nothing arrested his ambition. His ends were great, and he associated the rise of his country with his more selfish objects, but he was unscrupulous as to his means. Avid of glory, he was not keenly susceptible to honour. He seems rather not to have comprehended, than, comprehending, to have disdained, the limits which principle sets to action. Remarkably far-sighted, he possessed, more than any of his contemporaries, the prophetic science of affairs:—patient, vigilant, and profound, he was always energetic, because always prepared.

Such was the rival of Aristides, and such the rising leader of the popular party at Athens.

III. History is silent as to the part taken by Aristides in the impeachment of Miltiades, but there is no reason to believe that he opposed the measure of the Alcmæonid party with which he acted, and which seems to have obtained the ascendency after the death of Miltiades. In the year following the battle of Marathon, we find Aristides in the eminent dignity of archon.

In this office he became generally known by the title of the Just. His influence, his official rank, the power of the party that supported him, soon rendered him the principal authority of Athens. The courts of the judges were deserted, every litigant repaired to his arbitration—his administration of power obtained him almost the monopoly of it. Still, however, he was vigorously opposed by Themistocles and the popular faction led by that aspiring rival.

By degrees, various reasons, the chief of which was his own high position, concurred to diminish the authority of Aristides; even amongst his own partisans he lost ground, partly by the jealousy of the magistrates, whose authority he had superseded—and partly, doubtless, from a maxim more dangerous to a leader than any he can adopt, viz. impartiality between friends and foes in the appointment to offices. Aristides regarded not the political opinions, but the abstract character or talents, of the candidates. With Themistocles, on the contrary, it was a favourite saying, "The gods forbid that I should be in power, and my friends no partakers of my success." The tendency of the first policy is to discontent friends, while it rarely, if ever, conciliates foes; neither is it so elevated as it may appear to the superficial; for, if we contend for the superiority of one set of principles over another, we weaken the public virtue when we give equal rewards to the principles we condemn as to the principles we approve. We make it appear as if the contest had been but a war of names, and we disregard the harmony which ought imperishably to exist between the opinions which the state should approve, and the honours which the state can confer. He who is impartial as to persons must submit to seem lukewarm as to principles. Thus the more towering and eminent the seeming power of Aristides, the more really hollow and insecure were its foundations. To his own party it was unproductive—to the multitude it appeared unconstitutional. The extraordinary honours he had acquired—his monopoly of the magistrature—his anti-popular opinions, could not but be regarded with fear by a people so jealous of their liberties. He seemed to their apprehensions to be approaching gradually to the sovereignty of the state—not, indeed, by guards and military force, but the more dangerous encroachments of civil authority. The moment for the attack arrived. Themistocles could count at last upon the chances of a critical experiment, and Aristides was subjected to the ordeal of the ostracism.

IV. The method of the ostracism was this:—

each citizen wrote upon a shell, or a piece of broken earthenware, the name of the person he desired to banish. The magistrates counted the shells, and if they amounted to six thousand, (a very considerable proportion of the free population, and less than which rendered the ostracism invalid,) they were sorted, and the man whose name was found on the greater number of shells, was exiled for ten years, with full permission to enjoy his estates. The sentence was one that honoured while it afflicted, nor did it involve any other accusation than that of being too powerful or too ambitious for the citizen of a free state. It is a well-known story, that, during the process of voting, an ignorant burgher came to Aristides, whose person he did not know, and requested him to write down the name of Aristides.

"Has he ever injured you?" asked the great man.

"No," answered the clown, "nor do I know him even by sight; but it vexes me to hear him everywhere called the 'Just.'"

Aristides replied not—he wrote his own name on the shell, and returned it to the enlightened voter. Such is a tale to which more importance than is its due has been attached. Yet perhaps we can give a new reading to the honest burgher's reply, and believe that it was not so expressive

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of envy at the virtue, as of fear at the reputation. Aristides received the sentence of exile with his accustomed dignity. His last words on leaving his native city were characteristic of his generous and lofty nature. B.C. 483. "May the Athenian people," he said, "never know the day which shall force them to remember Aristides!"—A wish, fortunately alike for the exile and the people, not realized. That day, so patriotically deprecated, soon came, glorious equally to Athens and Aristides, and the reparation of wrong, and the triumph of liberty, found a common date.

The singular institution of the ostracism is often cited in proof of the ingratitude of a republic, and the fickleness of a people; but it owed its origin not to republican disorders, but to despotic encroachment—not to a people, but to a tyrant. If we look throughout all the Grecian states, we find that a tyranny was usually established by some able and artful citizen, who, attaching himself either to the aristocratic, or more frequently to the popular party, was suddenly elevated into supreme power, with the rise of the faction he had espoused. Establishing his fame by popular virtues, he was enabled often to support his throne by a moral authority —more dangerous than the odious defence of military hirelings: hence necessarily arose amongst the free states a jealousy of individuals, whose eminence became such as to justify an undue ambition; and hence, for a long period, while liberty was yet tender and insecure, the (almost) necessity of the ostracism. Aristotle, who laments and condemns the practice, yet allows that in certain states it was absolutely requisite; he thinks the evil it is intended to prevent 'might have been provided for in the earlier epochs of a commonwealth, by guarding against the rise of one man to a dangerous degree of power; but where the habits and laws of a nation are so formed as to render it impossible to prevent the rise, you must then guard against its consequences:' and in another part of his Politics, he observes, 'that even in republics, where men are regarded, not according to their wealth, but worth—where the citizens love liberty and have arms and valour to defend it; yet, should the pre-eminent virtues of one man, or of one family, totally eclipse the merit of the community at large, you have but two choices—the ostracism or the throne.'

If we lament the precaution, we ought then to acknowledge the cause. The ostracism was the creature of the excesses of the tyrannical, and not of the popular, principle. The bland

and specious hypocrisy of Pisistratus continued to work injury long after his death,—and the ostracism of Aristides was the necessary consequence of the seizure of the citadel. Such evil hath arbitrary power, that it produces injustice in the contrary principles as a counterpart to the injustice of its own;—thus the oppression of our Catholic countrymen for centuries resulted from the cruelties and persecutions of a papal ascendency. We remembered the danger, and we resorted to the rigid precaution. To guard against a second tyranny of opinion, we condemned, nor perhaps without adequate cause, not one individual, but a whole sect, to a moral ostracism. Ancient times are not then so opposite to the present—and the safety of the state may excuse, in a republic as in a monarchy, a thousand acts of abstract injustice. But the banishment of Aristides has peculiar excuses in the critical circumstances of the time. The remembrance of Pisistratus was still fresh—his son had but just perished in an attempt on his country—the family still lived, and still menaced;—the republic was yet in its infancy—a hostile aristocracy within its walls—a powerful enemy still formidable without. It is a remarkable fact, that as the republic strengthened, and as the popular power increased, the custom of ostracism was superseded. The democratic party was never so strong as at the time in which it was finally abolished. It is the insecurity of power, whether in a people or a king, that generates suspicion. Habituated to liberty, a people become less rigid and more enlightened as to its precautions.

V. It had been a saying of Aristides "that if the Athenians desired their affairs to prosper, they ought to fling Themistocles and himself into the barathrum." But fortune was satisfied at this time with a single victim, and reserved the other for a later sacrifice. Relieved from the presence of a rival, who had constantly crossed and obstructed his career, Themistocles found ample scope for his genius. He was not one of those who are unequal to the situation it costs them so much to obtain. On his entrance into public life he is said by Theophrastus to have possessed only three talents, but the account is inconsistent with the extravagance of his earlier career, and still more with the expenses to which a man who attempts to lead a party is, in all popular states, unavoidably subjected. More probably, therefore, it is said of him by others, that he inherited a competent patrimony, and he did not scruple to seize upon every occasion to increase it, whether through the open emolument, or the indirect perquisites, of public office. But, desiring wealth as a means, not an end, he grasped with one hand to lavish with the other. His generosity dazzled, and his manners seduced, the people, yet he exercised the power he acquired with a considerate and patriotic foresight. From the first retreat of the Persian armament, he saw that the danger was suspended, and not removed. But the Athenians, who shared a common Grecian fault, and ever thought too much of immediate, too little of distant, peril, imagined that Marathon had terminated the great contest between Asia and Europe. They forgot the fleets of Persia, but they still dreaded the gallies of Ægina. The oligarchy of that rival state was the political enemy of the Athenian demos,—the ally of the Persian was feared by the conqueror, and every interest, military and commercial, contributed to feed the passionate and jealous hate that existed against a neighbour, too near to forget, too warlike to despise. The thoughtful and profound policy of Themistocles resolved to work this popular sentiment to ulterior objects; and urging upon a willing audience the necessity of making suitable preparations against Ægina, then the mistress of the seas, he proposed to construct a navy, fitted equally to resist the Persian, and to open a new dominion to the Athenians.

To effect this purpose he called into aid one of the most valuable sources of her power which Nature had bestowed upon Athens.

VI. Around the country by the ancient Thoricus, on the road from the modern Kerratia to the Cape of Sunium, heaps of scoriæ indicate to the traveller that he is in the neighbourhood of the once celebrated silver mines of Laurion; he passes through pines and woodlands—he notices the indented tracks of wheels which two thousand years have not effaced from the soil—he discovers the ancient shafts of the mines, and pauses before the foundations of a large circular tower and the extensive remains of the castles which fortified the neighbouring town.* A little farther, and still passing amongst mine-banks and hillocks of scoriæ, he beholds upon Cape Colonna the fourteen existent columns of the Temple of Minerva Sunias. In this country, to which the old name is still attached,† is to be found a principal cause of the renown and the reverses of Athens,—of the victory of Salamis—of the expedition to Sicily.

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* See Dodwell's "Tour through Greece," Gell's "Itinerary."

† "Called by some Laurion Oros, or Mount Laurion." Gell's Itinerary.

It appears that the silver mines of Laurion had been worked from a very remote period—beyond even any traditional date. But as it is well and unanswerably remarked, "the scarcity of silver in the time of Solon proves that no systematic or artificial process of mining could at that time have been established."* It was, probably, during the energetic and politic rule of the dynasty of Pisistratus, that efficient means were adopted to derive adequate advantage from so fertile a source of national wealth. And when, subsequently, Athens, profiting from the lessons of her tyrants, allowed the genius of her free people to administer the state, fresh necessity was created for wealth against the hostility of Sparta—fresh impetus given to general industry and public enterprise. Accordingly, we find that shortly after the battle of Marathon, the yearly profits of the mines were immense. We learn from the researches of one of those eminent Germans† who have applied so laborious a learning with so subtle an acuteness to the elucidation of ancient history, that these mines were always considered the property of the state; shares in them were sold to individuals as tenants in fee farms, and these proprietors paid, besides, an annual sum into the public treasury, amounting to the twenty-fourth part of the produce. The state, therefore, received a regular revenue from the mines, derived from the purchase-monies and the reserved rents. This revenue had been hitherto divided amongst all the free citizens, and the sum allotted to each was by no means inconsiderable, when Themistocles, at an early period of his career, (before even the ostracism of Aristides,) had the courage to propose that a fund thus lucrative to every individual should be appropriated to the national purpose of enlarging the navy. The feud still carried on with the Æginetans was his pretext and excuse. But we cannot refuse our admiration to the fervent and generous order of public spirit existent at that time, when we find that it was a popular leader who proposed to, and carried through, a popular assembly the motion, that went to impoverish the men who supported his party and adjudged his proposition. Privileged and sectarian bodies never willingly consent to a surrender of pecuniary benefits for a mere public end. But amongst the vices of a popular assembly, it possesses the redeeming virtue to be generous. Upon a grand and unconscious principle of selfishness, a democracy rarely grudges a sacrifice endured for the service of the state.

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* Boëckh's Dissert. on the Silver Mines of Laurium.

† Ibid.

The money thus obtained was devoted to the augmentation of the maritime force to two hundred triremes—an achievement that probably exhausted the mine revenue for some years; and the custom once broken, the produce of Laurion does not seem again to have been wasted upon individuals. To maintain and increase the new navy, a decree was passed, either at that time,* or somewhat later, which ordained twenty triremes to be built yearly.

VII. The construction of these vessels, the very sacrifice of the citizens, the general interest that must have attached to an undertaking that was at once novel in itself, and yet congenial not more to the passions of a people, who daily saw from their own heights the hostile rock of Ægina, "the eyesore of the Piræus," than to the habits of men placed in a sterile land that on three sides tempted to the sea—all combined to assist Themistocles in his master policy—a policy which had for its design gradually to convert the Athenians from an agricultural into a maritime people. What was imputed to him as a reproach became his proudest distinction, viz. that "he first took his countrymen from the spear and shield, and sent them to the bench and oar."

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* On this point, see Boëckh. Dissert. on the Silver Mines of Laurion, in reference to the account of Diodorus.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PREPARATIONS OF DARIUS—REVOLT OF EGYPT—DISPUTE FOR THE SUCCESSION TO THE PERSIAN THRONE—DEATH OF DARIUS—BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LEADING EVENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS REIGN.

I. While, under the presiding genius of Themistocles, Athens was silently laying the foundation of her naval greatness, and gradually increasing in influence and renown, the Persian monarch was not forgetful of the burning of Sardis, and the defeat of Marathon. The armies of a despotic power are often slow to collect, and unwieldy to unite, and Darius wasted three years in despatching emissaries to various cities, and providing transports, horses, and forage for a new invasion.

The vastness of his preparations, though congenial to Oriental warfare, was probably proportioned to objects more great than those which appear in the Greek historians. There is no reason, indeed, to suppose that he cherished the gigantic project afterwards entertained by his son—a project no less than that of adding Europe as a province to the empire of the East. But symptoms of that revolt in Egypt which shortly occurred, may have rendered it advisable to collect an imposing force upon other pretences; and without being carried away by any frantic revenge against the remote and petty territory of Athens, Darius could not but be sensible that the security of his Ionian, Macedonian, and Thracian conquests, with the homage already rendered to his sceptre by the isles of Greece, made it necessary to redeem the disgrace of the Persian arms, and that the more insignificant the foe, the more fatal, if unpunished, the example of resistance. The Ionian coasts—the entrance into Europe—were worth no inconsiderable effort, and the more distant the provinces to be awed, the more stupendous, according to all the rules of Asiatic despotism, should appear the resources of the sovereign. He required an immense armament, not so much for the sake of crushing the Athenian foe, as of exhibiting in all its might the angry majesty of the Persian empire.

II. But while Asia was yet astir with the martial preparations of the Great King, Egypt revolted

B.C. 486.

from his sway, and, at the same time, the peace of Darius was embittered, and his mind engaged, by a contest amongst his sons for the succession to the crown. Artabazanes, the eldest of his family, born to him by his first wife, previous to his own elevation to the throne, founded his claim upon the acknowledged rights of primogeniture; but Xerxes, the eldest of a second family by Atossa, daughter of the great Cyrus, advanced, on the other hand, a direct descent from the blood of the founder of the Persian empire. Atossa, who appears to have inherited something of her father's genius, and who, at all events, exercised unbounded influence over Darius, gave to the claim of her son a stronger support than that which he could derive from argument or custom. The intrigue probably extended from the palace throughout the pure Persian race, who could not but have looked with veneration upon a descendant of Cyrus, nor could there have seemed a more popular method of strengthening whatever was defective in the title of Darius to the crown, than the transmission of his sceptre to a son, in whose person were united the rights of the new dynasty and the sanctity of the old. These reasonings prevailed with Darius, whose duty it was to nominate his own successor, and Xerxes was declared his heir. While the contest was yet undecided, there arrived at the Persian court, Demaratus, the deposed and self-exiled king of Sparta. He attached himself to the cause and person of Xerxes, and is even said to have furnished the young prince with new arguments, founded on the usages of Sparta—an assertion not to be wholly disregarded, since Demaratus appeared before the court in the character of a monarch, if in the destitution of an exile, and his suggestions fell upon the ear of an arbiter willing to seize every excuse to justify the resolution to which he had already arrived.

This dispute terminated, Darius in person prepared to march against the Egyptian rebels, when his death consigned to the inexperienced hands of his heir the command of his armies and the execution of his designs. B.C. 485.

The long reign of Darius, extending over thirty-six years, was memorable for vast improvements in the administrations of the empire, nor will it, in this place, be an irrelevant digression, to glance briefly and rapidly back over some of the events and the innovations by which it was distinguished.

III. The conquest of Cyrus had transplanted, as the ruling people, to the Median empire, a race of brave and hardy, but simple and un-

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civilized warriors. Cambyses, of whose character no unequivocal evidence remains, since the ferocious and frantic crimes ascribed to him* are conveyed to us through the channel of the Egyptian priests, whom he persecuted, most probably, rather as a political nobility than a religious caste, could but slightly have improved the condition of the people, or the administration of the empire, since his reign lasted but seven years and five months, during which he was occupied with the invasion of Africa, and the subjugation of Egypt. At the conclusion of his reign, he was menaced by a singular conspiracy. The Median magi conspired, in his absence from the seat of empire, to elevate a Mede to the throne. Cambyses, under the impulse of jealous and superstitious fears, had lately put to death Smerdis, his brother. The secret was kept from the multitude, and known only to a few,—amongst others, to the Magian whom Cambyses had entrusted with the charge of his palace at Susa, an office as important as confidential. This man conceived a scheme of amazing but not unparalleled boldness. His brother, a namesake of the murdered prince, resembled the latter also in age and person. This brother, the chief of the household, with the general connivance of his sacerdotal caste, who were naturally anxious to restore the Median dynasty, suddenly declared to be the true Smerdis, and the impostor, admitted to possession of the palace, asserted his claim to the sovereign power. The consent of the magi—the indifference of the people—the absence, not only of the king, but of the flower of the Persian race—and above all, the tranquil possession of the imperial palace, conspired to favour the deceit.* Placed on the Persian throne, but concealing his person from the eyes of the multitude in the impenetrable pomp of an Oriental seraglio, the Pseudo Smerdis had the audacity to despatch, amongst the heralds that proclaimed his accession, a messenger to the Egyptian army, demanding their allegiance. The envoy found Cambyses at Ecbatana in Syria. Neither cowardice nor sloth was the fault of that monarch; he sprang upon his horse, determined to march at once to Susa, when the sheath fell from his sword, and he received a mortal wound from the naked blade. Cambyses left no offspring, and the impostor, believed by the people to be the true son of Cyrus, issued, from the protecting and august obscurity of his palace, popular proclamations and beneficent edicts. Whatever his present fraud, whatever his previous career, this daring Mede was enabled to make his reign beloved and respected. After his death he was regretted by all but the Persians, who would not have received the virtues of a god as an excuse for the usurpation of a Mede. Known to the vast empire only by his munificence of spirit—by his repeal of tribute and service, the impostor permitted none to his presence, who could have detected the secret. He never quitted his palace—the nobles were not invited to his banquets—the women in his seraglio were separated each from each—and it was only in profound darkness that the partners of his pleasures were admitted to his bed. The imposture is said by Herodotus to have been first discovered in the following manner:—the

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* If we except the death of his brother, in the Cambyses of Ctesias, we find none of the crimes of the Cambyses of Herodotus—and even that fratricide loses its harsher aspect in the account of Ctesias, and Cambyses is represented as betrayed into the crime by a sincere belief in his brother's treason.

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* The account of this conspiracy in Ctesias seems more improbable than that afforded to us by Herodotus. But in both, the most extraordinary features of the plot are the same, viz. the striking likeness between the impostor and the dead prince, and the complete success which, for a time, attended the fraud. In both narrations too we can perceive, behind the main personages ostensibly brought forward, the outline of a profound device of the magi to win back from the Persian conquerors, and secure to a Mede, the empire of the East.

Magian, according to the royal custom, had appropriated to himself the wives of Cambyses; one of these was the daughter of Otanes, a Persian noble whom the secluded habits of the pretended king filled with suspicion. For some offence, the Magian had been formerly deprived of his ears by the order of Cyrus. Otanes communicated this fact, with his suspicions, to his daughter, and the next time she was a partaker of the royal couch, she took the occasion of his sleep to convince herself that the sovereign of the East was a branded and criminal impostor. The suspicions of Otanes verified, he entered, with six other nobles, into a conspiracy, which mainly owed its success to the resolution and energy of one amongst them, named Darius, who appears to have held a station of but moderate importance among the royal guard, though son of Hystaspes, governor of the province of Persis, and of the purest and loftiest blood of Persia. The conspirators penetrated the palace unsuspected—put the eunuchs who encountered them to death—and reached the chamber in which the usurper himself was seated with his brother. The impostors, though but imperfectly armed, defended themselves with valour; two of the conspirators were wounded, but the swords of the rest sufficed to consummate the

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work, and Darius himself gave the death-blow to one of the brothers.

This revolution was accompanied and stained by an indiscriminate massacre of the Magi. Nor did the Persians, who bore to that Median tribe the usual hatred which conquerors feel to the wisest and the noblest part of the conquered race, content themselves with a short-lived and single revenge. The memory of the imposture and the massacre was long perpetuated by a solemn festival, called "the Slaughter of the Magi," or Magophonia, during which no Magian was permitted to be seen abroad.

The result of this conspiracy threw into the hands of the seven nobles the succession to the Persian throne: the election fell upon Darius, the soul of the enterprise, and who was of that ancient and princely house of the Achæmenids, in which the Persians recognised the family of their ancestral kings. But the other conspirators had not struggled solely to exchange one despot for another. With a new monarchy arose a new oligarchy. Otanes was even exempted from allegiance to the monarch, and his posterity were distinguished by such exclusive honours and immunities, that Herodotus calls them the only Persian family which retained its liberty. The other conspirators probably made a kind of privileged council, since they claimed the right of access at all hours, unannounced, to the presence of the king—a privilege of the utmost value in eastern forms of government—and their power was rendered permanent and solid by certain restrictions on marriage,* which went to maintain a constant alliance between the Royal family and their own. While the six conspirators rose to an oligarchy, the tribe of the Pasargadæ—the noblest of those sections into which the pure Persian family was divided—became an aristocracy to officer the army and adorn the court. But though the great body of the conquered Medes were kept in subject inferiority, yet the more sternly enforced from the Persian resentment at the late Median usurpation, Darius prudently conciliated the most powerful of that great class of his subjects by

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* Herodotus says it was resolved that the king could only marry into the family of one of the conspirators; but Darius married two daughters and one grand-daughter of Cyrus. It is more consonant with eastern manners to suppose that it was arranged that the king should give his own daughters in marriage to members of these six houses. It would have been scarcely possible to claim the monopoly of the royal seraglio, whether its tenants were wives or concubines, and in all probability the king's choice was only limited, (nor that very rigidly) to the family of Cyrus, and the numerous and privileged race of the Achæmenids.

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offices of dignity and command, and of all the tributary nations, the Medes ranked next to the Persians.

IV. With Darius, the Persian monarchy progressed to that great crisis in the civilisation of those states founded by conquering Nomades, when, after rich possessions are seized, cities built, and settlements established, the unwieldy and enormous empire is divided into provinces, and satrap government reflects in every district the mingled despotism and subservience, pomp and insecurity, of the imperial court. Darius undoubtedly took the most efficient means in his power to cement his sway, and organize his resources. For the better collection of tribute, twenty provinces were created, governed by twenty satraps. Hitherto no specific and regular tax had been levied, but the Persian kings had been contented with reluctant presents, or arbitrary extortions. Darius now imposed a limited and annual impost, amounting, according to the computation of Herodotus, to fourteen thousand five hundred and sixty talents, collected partially from Africa, principally from Asia.* The

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* Besides the regular subsidies, we gather from Herodotus, l. c. 92, that the general population was obliged to find subsistence for the king and his armies. Babylon raised a supply for four months, the resources of that satrapy being adequate to a third part of Asia.

Persians, as the conquering and privileged race, were excluded from the general imposition, but paid their moderate contribution under the softer title of gratuity. The Colchians fixed their own burthens—the Ethiopians that bordered Egypt, with the inhabitants of the sacred town of Nyssa, rendered also tributary gratuities—while Arabia offered the homage of her frankincense, and India* of her gold. The empire of Darius was the more secure, in that it was contrary to its constitutional spirit to innovate on the interior organization of the distant provinces—they enjoyed their own national laws and institutions—they even retained their monarchs—they resigned nothing but their independence and their tribute. The duty of the satraps was as yet but civil and financial: they were responsible for the imposts, they executed the royal decrees. Their institution was outwardly designed but for the better collection of the revenue; but, when from the ranks of the nobles Darius rose to the throne, he felt the advantage of creating subject principalities, calculated at once to remove and to content the more powerful and ambitious of his former equals. Save Darius himself, no monarch in the known world possessed the dominion or enjoyed the splendour accorded to these imperial viceroys. Babylon and Assyria fell to one—Media was not sufficient for another—nation was added to nation, and race to race, to form a province worthy the nomination of a representative of the Great King. His pomp and state was such as befitted the viceroy over monarchs. A measure of silver, exceeding the Attic Medimnus, was presented every day to the satrap of Babylon.* Eight hundred stallions and sixteen thousand mares were apportioned to his stables, and the tax of four Assyrian towns was to provide for the maintenance of his Indian dogs.

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* That comparatively small and frontier part of India known to Darius.

But under Darius, at least, these mighty officers were curbed and kept in awe by the periodical visits of the king himself, or his commissioners;—while a broad road, from the western coast to the Persian capital—inns, that received the messengers, and couriers, that transmitted the commands of the king, brought the more distant provinces within the reach of ready intelligence, and vigilant control. These latter improvements were well calculated to quicken the stagnant languor habitual to the over-growth of eastern empire. Nor was the reign of Darius undistinguished by the cultivation of the more elegant arts—since to that period may be referred, if not the foundation, at least the embellishment and increase of Persepolis. The remains of the palace of Chil-Menar, ascribed by modern superstition to the architecture of genii, its graceful columns, its mighty masonry, its terrace-flights, its marble basins, its sculptured designs stamped with the unmistakeable emblems of the Magian faith, sufficiently evince that the shepherd-soldiery of Cyrus had already learned to appreciate and employ the most elaborate arts of the subjugated Medes.

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* Forming a revenue of more than 100,000*l.* sterling.—Heeren's Persians, chap. ii.

During this epoch, too, was founded a more regular military system, by the institution of conscriptions—while the subjection of the skilful sailors of Phœnicia, and of the great maritime cities of Asiatic Greece, brought to the Persian warfare the new arm of a numerous and experienced navy.

V. The reign of Darius is also remarkable for the influence which Grecian strangers began to assume in the Persian court—and the fatal and promiscuous admission of Grecian mercenaries into the Persian service. The manners of the Persians were naturally hospitable, and Darius possessed not only an affable temper, but

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an inquisitive mind. A Greek physician of Crotona, who succeeded in relieving the king from the effects of a painful accident which had baffled the Egyptian practitioners, esteemed the most skilful the court possessed, naturally rose into an important personage. His reputation was increased by a more difficult cure upon the person of Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, who, from the arms of her brother Cambyses, and those of the Magian impostor, passed to the royal marriage bed. And the physician, though desirous only of returning, through some pretext, to his own country, perhaps first inflamed the Persian king with the ill-starred wish of annexing Greece to his dominions. He despatched a commission, with the physician himself, to report on the affairs of Greece. Many Hellenic adventurers were at that time scattered over the empire, some who had served with Cambyses, others who had sided with the Egyptians. Their valour recommended them to a valiant people, and their singular genius for intrigue took root in every soil. Syloson, a Greek of Samos, brother to Polycrates, the tyrant of that state, who, after a career of unexampled felicity and renown, fell a victim to the hostile treachery of Orœtes, the satrap of Sardis, induced Darius to send over Otanes at the head of a Persian force, to restore him to the principality of his murdered brother; and when, subsequently, in his Scythian expedition, Darius was an eye-witness of the brilliant civilisation of Ionia, not only did Greece become to him more an object of ambition, but the Greeks of his respect. He sought, by a munificent and wise clemency, to attach them to his throne, and to colonize his territories with subjects valuable alike for their constitutional courage and national intelligence. Nor can we wonder at the esteem which a Hippias or a Demaratus found in the Persian councils, when, in addition to the general reputation of Greeks, they were invested with the dignity of princely rank—for above all nations,* the Persians most venerated the name and the attributes of a king; nor could their Oriental notions have accurately distinguished between a legitimate monarch and a Greek tyrant.

VI. In this reign, too, as the empire was concentrated, and a splendid court arose from the warrior camp of Cyrus and Cambyses, the noble elements of the pure Persian character grew confounded with the Median and Assyrian. As the Persians retreated from the manners of a nomad, they lost the distinction of a conquering people. Warriors became courtiers—the palace shrunk into the seraglio—eunuchs and favourites, queens,* and, above all, queen-mothers, rose into pernicious and invisible influence. And while the Greeks, in their small states and under their free governments, progressed to a civilisation, in which luxury only sharpened new energies and created new arts, the gorgeous enervation of a despotism destructive to competition, and an empire too vast for patriotism, rapidly debased and ruined the old hardy race of Cyrus,† perhaps equal originally to the Greeks in mental, and in many important points far superior to them in moral, qualities. With a religion less animated and picturesque, but more simple and exalted, rejecting the belief that the Gods partook of a mortal nature, worshipping their Great ONE not in statues or in temples, but upon the sublime altar of lofty mountain tops—or through those elementary agents, which are the unidolatrous representatives of His beneficence and power;*—accustomed. in their primitive and uncorrupted state, to mild laws and limited authority; inured from childhood to physical discipline and moral honesty, "to draw the bow and to speak the truth,"—this gallant and splendid tribe were fated to make one of the most signal proofs in history, that neither the talents of a despot, nor the original virtues of a people, can long resist the inevitable effect of vicious political constitutions. It was not at Marathon, nor at Salamis, nor at Platæa, that the Persian glory fell. It fell when the Persians imitated the manners of the slaves they conquered. "Most imitative of all men," says Herodotus, "they are ever ready to adopt the manners of the foreigners. They take from the Medes their robe, from the Egyptians their breastplate." Happy, if to the robe and the breastplate they had confined their appropriations from the nations they despised! Happy, if they had not imparted to their august religion the gross adulterations of the Median magi;—if they had not exchanged their mild laws and restricted government, for the most callous contempt of the value of life† and the dignity of freedom.

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* Such are the expressions of Herodotus. His testimony is corroborated by the anecdotes in his own history, and, indeed, by all other ancient authorities.

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* Dinon, (Apud Athen. lib. xiii.) observes, that the Persian queen tolerated the multitude of concubines common to the royal seraglio, because they worshipped her, like a divinity.

† See, in addition to more familiar authorities, the curious remarks and anecdotes relative to the luxury of the Persian kings, in the citations from Dinon, Heraclides, Agathocles, and Chares of Mitylene, scattered throughout Athenæus, lib. xii. xiii. xiv.; but especially lib. xii.

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[*] Strabo, lib. xv. Herod. lib. i. c. cxxxi. &c.

[†] Among innumerable instances of the disdain of human life contracted after their conquest by those very Persians who, in their mountain obscurity, would neither permit their so-

The whole of the pure Persian race, but especially the nobler tribe of the Pasargadæ, became raised by conquest over so vast a population, to the natural aristocracy of the land. But the valuable principle of aristocratic pride, which is the safest curb to monarchic encroachment, crumbled away in the atmosphere of a despotism, which received its capricious checks or awful chastisement only in the dark recesses of

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vereign to put any one to death for a single offence, nor the master of a household to exercise undue severity to a member of his family, (Herod. lib. i. c. cxxxvii.) is one recorded by Herodotus, and, in the main, corroborated by Justin. Darius is at the siege of Babylon; Zopyrus, one of the seven conspirators against the Magian, maims himself and enters Babylon as a deserter, having previously concerted with Darius that a thousand men, whose loss he could best spare, should be sent, one day, to the gate of Semiramis, and two thousand, another day, to the gates of Ninus, and four thousand, a third day, to the Chaldæan gates. All these detachments Zopyrus, at the head of the Babylonians, deliberately butchered. The confidence of the Babylonians thus obtained, Zopyrus was enabled to betray the city to the king. This cold-blooded and treacherous immolation of seven thousand subjects was considered by the humane Darius and the Persians generally a proof of the most illustrious virtue in Zopyrus, who received for it the reward of the satrapy of Babylon. The narrative is so circumstantial as to bear internal evidence of its general truth. In fact, a Persian would care no more for the lives of seven thousand Medes than a Spartan would care for the lives of suspected Helots.

a harem. Retaining to the last their disdain of all without the Persian pale; deeming themselves still "the most excellent of mankind;"* this people, the nobility of the East, with the arrogance of the Spartan, contracting the vices of the Helot, rapidly decayed from all their national and ancient virtues beneath that seraglio-rule of janissaries and harlots, in which, from first to last, have merged the melancholy destinies of Oriental despotism.

VII. Although Darius seems rather to have possessed the ardour for conquest than the genius for war, his reign was memorable for many military triumphs, some cementing, others extending, the foundations of the empire: A formidable insurrection of Babylon, which resisted a siege of twenty-one months, was effectually extinguished, and the new satrap government, aided by the yearly visits of the king, appears to have kept from all subsequent re-animation the vast remains of that ancient empire of the

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* Herodot. lib. i. c. cxxxiv. The Pasargadæ, whom the ancient writers evidently and often confound with the whole Persian population, retained the old education and severe discipline for their youth, long after the old virtues had died away. (See Strabo, xv. Herod. lib. i. and the rhetorical romance of Xenophon.) But laws and customs, from which the animating spirit of national opinion and sentiment has passed, are but the cenotaphs of dead forms embalmed in vain.

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Chaldæan kings. Subsequently an expedition along the banks of the Indus, first navigated for discovery by one of the Greeks whom Darius took into his employ, subjected the highlands north of the Indus, and gave that distant river as a new boundary to the Persian realm. More important, had the fortunes of his son been equal to his designs, was the alarming settlement which the monarch of Asia effected on the European continent, by establishing his sovereignty in Thrace and Macedonia—by exacting homage from the isles and many of the cities of Greece—by breaking up, with the crowning fall of Miletus, the independence and rising power of those Ionian colonies, which ought to have established on the Asiatic coasts the permanent barrier to the irruptions of eastern conquest. Against these successes the loss of six thousand four hundred men at the battle of Marathon, a less number than Darius deliberately sacrificed in a stratagem at the siege of Babylon, would have seemed but a petty counterbalance in the dispatches of his generals, set off, as it was, by the spoils and the captives of Eubœa. Nor were the settlements in Thrace and Macedon, with the awe that his vast armament excited throughout that portion of his dominions, an insufficient recompense for the disasters of the expedition, conducted by Darius in person, against the wandering, fierce, and barbarous Mongolian race, that, known to us by the name of Scythians, worshipped their war-god, under the symbol of a cimiter, with libations of human blood,—hideous inhabitants of the inhospitable and barren tracts that interpose between the Danube and the Don.

VIII. Thus the heritage that passed from Darius to Xerxes was the fruit of a long and, upon the whole, a wise and glorious reign. The new sovereign of the East did not, like his father, find a disjointed and uncemented empire of countries rather conquered than subdued, destitute alike of regular revenues and local governments; a wandering camp, shifted to and fro in a wilderness of unconnected nations;—Xerxes ascended the throne amidst a splendid court, with Babylon, Ecbatana, Persepolis, and Susa for his palaces. Submissive satraps united the most distant provinces with the seat of empire. The wealth of Asia was borne in regular currents to his treasury. Save the revolt of the enfeebled Egyptians, and the despised victory of a handful of men upon a petty foreland of the remote Ægæan, no cloud rested upon the dawn of his reign. As yet unfelt and unforeseen were the dangers that might ultimately result from the very wisdóm of Darius in the institution of satraps, who, if not sufficiently supported by military force, would be unable to control the motley nations over which they presided, and, if so supported, might themselves become, in any hour, the most formidable rebels. To whatever prestige he inherited from the fame of his father, the young king added, also, a more venerable and sacred dignity in the eyes of his Persian aristocracy, and, perhaps, throughout the whole empire, derived, on his mother's side, from the blood of Cyrus. Never, to all external appearance, and, to ordinary foresight, under fairer auspices, did a prince of the East pass from the luxury of a seraglio to the majesty of a throne.

CHAPTER V.

XERXES CONDUCTS AN EXPEDITION INTO EGYPT—HE FINALLY RESOLVES ON THE INVASION OF GREECE—VAST PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONQUEST OF EUROPE—XERXES ARRIVES AT SARDIS—DESPATCHES ENVOYS TO THE GREEK STATES, DEMANDING TRIBUTE—THE BRIDGE OF THE HELLESPONT—REVIEW OF THE PERSIAN ARMAMENT AT ABYDOS—XERXES ENCAMPS AT THERMË.

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485 B. C.

I. On succeeding to the throne of the East, Xerxes found the mighty army collected by his father, prepared to execute his designs of conquest or revenge. In the greatness of that army, in the youth of that prince, various parties beheld the instrument of interest or ambition. Mardonius, warlike and enterprising, desired the subjugation of Greece, and the command of the Persian forces. And to the nobles of the Pasargadæ an expedition into Europe could not but present a dazzling prospect of spoil and power—of satrapies as yet unexhausted of treasure—of garrisons and troops remote from the eye of the monarch, and the domination of the capital.

The persons who had most influence over

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Xerxes were his uncle Artabanus, his cousin Mardonius, and an eunuch named Natacas.* The intrigues of the party favourable to the invasion of Europe were backed by the representations of the Grecian exiles. The family and partizans of the Pisistratidæ had fixed themselves in Susa, and the Greek subtlety and spirit of enterprise maintained and confirmed, for that unprincipled and able faction, the credit they had already established at the Persian court. Onomacritus, an Athenian priest, formerly banished by Hipparchus for forging oracular predictions, was now reconciled to the Pisistratidæ, and resident at Susa. Presented to the king as a soothsayer and prophet, he inflamed the ambition of Xerxes by garbled oracles of conquest and fortune, which, this time, it was not the interest of the Pisistratidæ to expose.

About the same period the Aleuadæ, those princes of Thessaly whose policy seems ever to have been that of deadly hostility to the Grecian republics, despatched ambassadors to Xerxes, inviting him to Greece, and promising assistance to his arms, and allegiance to his sceptre.

II. From these intrigues Xerxes aroused himself in the second year of his reign, and, as the necessary commencement of more extended designs, conducted in person an expedition against the rebellious Egyptians. That people had neither military skill nor constitutional hardihood, but they were inspired with the most devoted affection for their faith and their institutions. This affection was to them what the love of liberty is in others—it might be easy to conquer them, it was almost impossible to subdue. By a kind of fatality their history, for centuries, was interwoven with that of Greece:—their perils and their enemies the same. The ancient connexion which apocryphal tradition recorded between races so opposite, seemed a typical prophecy of that which actually existed in the historical times. And if formerly Greece had derived something of civilisation from Egypt, she now paid back the gift by the swords of her adventurers;—and the bravest and most loyal part of the Egyptian army was composed of Grecian mercenaries. At the same time Egypt shared the fate of all nations that entrust too great a power to auxiliaries. Greeks defended her, but Greeks conspired against her. The adventurers from whom she derived a fatal strength were of a vain, wily, and irritable temperament. A Greek removed from the influences of Greece usually lost all that was honest, all that was noble in the national character; and with the most refining intellect, he united a policy like that of the Italian in the middle ages, fierce, faithless, and depraved. Thus, while the Greek auxiliaries under Amasis, or rather Psammenitus, resisted to the last the arms of Cambyses, it was by a Greek (Phanes) that Egypt had been betrayed. Perhaps, could we thoroughly learn all the secret springs of the revolt of Egypt, and the expedition of Xerxes, we might find a coincidence not of dates alone between Grecian and Egyptian affairs. Whether in Memphis or in Susa, it is wonderful to see the amazing influence and ascendancy which the Hellenic intellect obtained. It was in reality the desperate refuse of Europe, that swayed the councils, moved the armies, and decided the fate of the mighty dynasties of the East.

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* Ctesias, 20.

484 B.C. III. The arms of Xerxes were triumphant in Egypt, and he more rigorously enforced upon that ill-fated land the iron despotism commenced by Cambyses. Entrusting the Egyptian government to his brother Achæmenes, the Persian king returned to Susa, and flushed with his victory, and more and more influenced by the ambitious councils of Mardonius, he now fairly opened, in the full divan of his councillors, the vast project he had conceived. The vanity of the Greeks led them too credulously to suppose

that the invasion of Greece was the principal object of the Great king; on the contrary, it was the least. He regarded Greece but as the threshold of a new quarter of the globe. Ignorant of the nature of the lands he designed to subject, and credulous of all the fables which impart proverbial magnificence to the Unknown, Xerxes saw in Europe "regions not inferior to Asia in extent, and far surpassing it in fertility." After the conquest of Greece on either continent, the young monarch unfolded to his councillors his intention of over-running the whole of Europe, "until heaven itself should be the only limit to the Persian realm, and the sun should shine on no country contiguous to his own."*

IV. These schemes, supported by Mardonius, were opposed only by Artabanus; and the arguments of the latter, dictated by prudence and experience, made considerable impression upon the king. From that time, however, new engines of superstitious craft and imposture were brought to bear upon the weak mind, on whose decision now rested the fatal war between Asia and Europe. Visions and warnings, threats and exhortations, haunted his pillow and disturbed his sleep, all tending to one object, the invasion of Greece. As we learn from Ctesias that the eunuch Natacas was one of the parasites most influential with Xerxes, it is probable that so important a personage in the intrigues of a palace, was, with the evident connivance of the Magi, the instrument of Mardonius. And, indeed, from this period the politics of Persia became more and more concentrated in the dark plots of the seraglio. Thus superstition, flattery, ambition, all operating upon him, the irresolution of Xerxes vanished. Artabanus himself affected to be convinced of the expediency of the war; and the only object now remaining to the king and his councillors, was to adapt the preparations to the magnitude of the enterprise. Four additional years were not deemed an idle delay in collecting an army and fleet destined to complete the conquest of the world.

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* Herod. lib. vii. c. xi.

"And never," says Herodotus, "was there a military expedition comparable to this. Hard would it be to specify one nation of Asia, which did not accompany the Persian king, or any waters, save the great rivers, which were not exhausted by his armament." Preparations for an expedition of three years were made, to guard against the calamities formerly sustained by the Persian fleet. Had the success of the expedition been commensurate with the grandeur of its commencement, perhaps, it would

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have ranked amongst the sublimest conceptions of military genius. All its schemes were of a vast and gigantic nature. Across the isthmus, which joins the promontory of Athos to the Thracian continent, a canal was formed—a work of so enormous a labour, that it seems almost to have justified the scepticism of later writers;* but for the concurrent testimony of Thucydides and Lysias, Plato, Herodotus and Strabo.

Bridges were also thrown over the river Strymon; the care of provisions was entrusted to the Egyptians and Phœnicians, and stores were deposited in every station that seemed the best adapted for supplies.

V. While these preparations were carried on, the Great King, at the head of his land forces, marched to Sardis. Passing the river Halys, and the frontiers of Lydia, he halted at Celænæ. Here he was magnificently entertained by Pythius, a Lydian, esteemed, next to the king himself, the richest of mankind. This wealthy subject proffered to the young prince, in prosecution of the war, the whole of his treasure, amounting to two thousand talents of silver, and four millions, wanting only seven thousand, of

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* Juvenal, Richardson, &c. The preparations at mount Athos commenced three years before Xerxes arrived at Sardis. (Compare Herod. l. vii 21, with 33, 37.)

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B.C. 480.

golden staters of Darius.* "My farms, and my slaves," he added, "will be sufficient to maintain me."

"My friend," said the royal guest, who possessed all the irregular generosity of princes, "you are the first person, since I left Persia, who has treated my army with hospitality and voluntarily offered me assistance in the war. Accept my friendship; I receive you as my host; retain your possessions, and permit me to supply the seven thousand staters, which are wanting to complete the four millions you already possess." A man who gives from the property of the public is seldom outdone in munificence.

Close of B. C. 481.

At length Xerxes arrived at Sardis, and thence he despatched heralds into Greece, demanding the tribute of earth and water. Athens and Sparta were the only cities not visited by his envoys.

VI. While Xerxes rested at the Lydian city, an enterprise, scarcely less magnificent in conception than that of the canal at Athos, was completed at the sacred passage of the Hellespont. Here, was constructed from the coast of Asia to that of Europe a bridge of boats, for the convoy

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* Differently computed; according to Montfaucon, the sum total may be estimated at thirty-two millions of Louis d'ors.

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of the army. Scarce was this completed when a sudden tempest scattered the vessels, and rendered the labour vain. The unruly passion of the high-spirited despot was popularly said to have evinced itself at this intelligence, by commanding the Hellespont to receive three hundred lashes, and a pair of fetters—a story recorded as a certainty by Herodotus, and more properly contemned as a fable by modern scepticism.

A new bridge was now constructed under new artificers, whose industry was sharpened by the fate of their unfortunate predecessors, whom Xerxes condemned to death. These architects completed at last two bridges of vessels, of various kinds and sizes, secured by anchors of great length, and thus protected from the influence of the winds that set in from the Euxine on the one hand, and the south and south-east winds on the other. The elaborate description of this work given by Herodotus, proves it to have been no clumsy or unartistlike performance. The ships do not appear so much to have formed the bridge, as to have served for piers to support its weight. Rafters of wood, rough timber, and layers of earth were placed across extended cables, and the whole was completed by a fence on either side, that the horses and beasts of bur-

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B.C. 480.

then might not be frightened by the sight of the open sea.

VII. And now the work was finished, the winter was passed, and at the dawn of returning spring, Xerxes led his armament from Sardis to Abydos. As the multitude commenced their march, it is said that the sun was suddenly overcast, and an abrupt and utter darkness crept over the face of Heaven. The Magi were solemnly consulted at the omen; and they foretold, that by the retirement of the sun, the tutelary divinity of the Greeks, was denoted the withdrawal of the protection of Heaven from that fated nation.—The answer pleased the king.

On they swept—the conveyance of the baggage, and a vast promiscuous crowd of all nations, preceding: behind, at a considerable interval, came the flower of the Persian army—a thousand horse—a thousand spearmen—the ten sacred steeds, called Nisæan,—the car of the great Persian God, drawn by eight snow-white horses, and in which no mortal ever dared to seat himself. Around the person of Xerxes were spearmen and cavalry, whose arms glittered with gold—the ten thousand infantry called "The Immortals," of whom nine thousand bore pomegranates of silver at the extremity of their lances, and one thousand, pomegranates, of gold. Ten thousand horsemen followed these: and far in the rear, the gorgeous procession closed with the mighty multitude of the general army.

The troops marched along the banks of the Caicus—over the plains of Thebes; and passing Mount Ida to the left, above whose hoary crest broke a storm of thunder and lightning, they arrived at the golden Scamander, whose waters failed the invading thousands. Here it is poetically told of Xerxes, that he ascended the citadel of Priam, and anxiously and carefully surveyed the place, while the Magi of the Barbarian monarch directed libations to the manes of the Homeric heroes.

VIII. Arrived at Abydos, the king reviewed his army. High upon an eminence, and on a seat of white marble, he surveyed the plains covered with countless thousands, and the Hellespont crowded with sails and masts. At first, as he gazed, the lord of Persia felt all the pride and exultation which the command over so many destinies was calculated to inspire. But a sad and sudden thought came over him in the midst of his triumphs, and he burst into tears. "I reflect," said he to Artabanus, "on the transitory limit of human life. I compassionate this vast multitude—a hundred years hence, which of

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them will still be a living man?" Artabanus replied, like a philosopher, "that the shortness of life was not its greatest evil; that misfortune and disease embittered the possession, and that death was often the happiest refuge of the living."*

At early daybreak, while the army yet waited the rising of the sun, they burnt perfumes on the bridge, and strewed it with branches of the triumphal myrtle. As the sun lifted himself above the east, Xerxes poured a libation into the sea, and addressing the rising orb, implored prosperity to the Persian arms, until they should have vanquished the whole of Europe, even to the remotest ends. Then casting the cup, with a Persian cimiter, into the sea, the signal was given for the army to commence the march. Seven days and seven nights were consumed in the passage of that prodigious armament.

IX. Thus entering Europe, Xerxes proceeded to Doriscus, (a wide plain of Thrace, commanded by a Persian garrison,) where he drew up, and regularly numbered, his troops;

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* It must be confessed that the tears of Xerxes were a little misplaced. He wept that men could not live a hundred years, at the very moment when he meditated destroying a tolerable portion of them as soon as he possibly could. Senec. de Brev. Vit. c. 17.

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the fleets ranged in order along the neighbouring coast. The whole amount of the land force, according to Herodotus, was 1,700,000. Later writers have been sceptical as to this vast number, but without sufficient grounds for their disbelief. There were to be found the soldiery of many nations:—the Persians in tunics and scale breast-plates, the tiara helmet of the Medes, the arrows, and the large bow which was their natural boast and weapon; there were the Medes similarly equipped; and the Assyrians, with barbarous helmets, linen cuirasses, and huge clubs tipped with iron; the Bactrians with bows of reeds, and the Scythian Sacæ, with their hatchets and painted crests. There, too, were the light-clothed Indians, the Parthians, Chorasmians, Sogdians, Gandarians and the Dadicæ. There were the Caspians, clad in tough hides, with bows and cimiters; the gorgeous tunics of the Sarangæ, and the loose-flowing vests (or ziræ) of the Arabians. There were seen the negroes of Æthiopian Nubia with palm bows four cubits long, arrows pointed with flint, and vestures won from the leopard and the lion; a barbarous horde, who, after the wont of savages, dyed their bodies with gypsum and vermilion when they went to war; while the straight-haired Asiatic Æthiopians wore the same armour as the

Indians, whom they bordered, save that their helmets were formed of the skin of the horse's head,* on which the mane was left in the place of plumage. The Libyans were amongst the horde, and the buskined Paphlagonians, with helms of net-work; and the Cappadocian Syrians; and the Phrygians; and the Armenians;—the Lydians, equipped similarly to the Greeks; the Strymonian Thracians, clad in tunics, below which were flowing robes like the Arabian ziræ or tartan, but of various colours, and buskins of the skins of fawns,—armed with the javelin and the dagger; the Thracians, too, of Asia, with helmets of brass wrought with the ears and horns of an ox; the people from the islands of the Red Sea, armed and equipped like Medes; the Marës and the Colchians, and the Moschi, and other tribes, tedious to enumerate, swelled and diversified the force of Xerxes.

Such were the infantry of the Persian army, forgetting not the ten thousand chosen Persians, called the Immortal Band,† whose armour shone with profuse gold, and who were distinguished even in war by luxury—carriages for their women, troops of attendants, and camels, and beasts of burthen.

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* Common also to the antient Germans.

† For this reason—whoever died, whether by disease or battle, had his place immediately supplied. Thus their number was invariably the same.

Besides these were the Persian cavalry; the nomad Sagartii, who carried with them nooses, in which they sought to entangle their foe; the Medes and the Indian horse, which last had also chariots of war drawn by steeds or wild asses; the Bactrians and Caspians, equipped alike; the Africans, who fought from chariots; the Paricanians; and the Arabians with their swift dromedaries, completed the forces of the cavalry, which amounted to eighty thousand, exclusive even of chariots and the camels.

Nor was the naval unworthy of the land armada. The number of the triremes was one thousand two hundred and seven. Of these the Phœnicians and the Syrians of Palestine furnished three hundred, the serving-men with breast-plates of linen, javelins, bucklers without bosses, and helmets fashioned nearly similarly to those of the Greeks; two hundred vessels were supplied by the Ægyptians, armed with huge battle-axes, and casques of net-work; one hundred and fifty vessels came from Cyprus, and one hundred from Cilicia; those who manned the first, differing in arms from the Greeks only in the adoption of the tunic, and the Median mitres worn by the chiefs—those who manned the last,

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with two spears, and tunics of wool. The Pamphylians, clad as the Greeks, contributed thirty vessels, and fifty also were manned by Lycians with mantles of goat-skin and unfeathered arrows of reed. In thirty vessels came the Dorians of Asia, ; in seventy the Carians, and in a hundred, the subjugated Ionians. The Grecian Isles between the Cyaneæ, and the promontories of Triopium and Sunium,* furnished seventeen vessels, and the Æolians sixty. The inhabitants of the Hellespont, (those of Abydos alone excepted, who remained to defend the bridges,) combined with the people of Pontus to supply a hundred more. In each vessel were detachments of Medes, Persians, and Sacæ: the best mariners were the Phœnicians, especially those of Sidon. The commanders-in-chief of the sea forces were Ariabignes, (son of Darius,) Prexaspes, Megabazus, (son of Megabates,) and Achæmenes, (brother of Xerxes, and satrap of Egypt.)

Of the infantry, the generals were Mardonius, Tritantæchmes, son of Artabanus, and Smerdones, (cousin to Xerxes,) Masistes, (his brother,) Gergis, and Megabazus, son of that celebrated Zopyrus, through whom Darius possessed himself of Babylon.†

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* Diod. Sic.

† See Note to p. 101.

Harmamithres and Tithæus, who were Medes, commanded the cavalry; a third leader, Pharnouches, died in consequence of a fall from his horse. But the name of a heroine, more masculine than her colleagues, must not be omitted: Artemisia, widow to one of the Carian kings, furnished five ships, (the best in the fleet next to those of Sidon,) which she commanded in person, celebrated alike for a dauntless courage and a singular wisdom.

X. Such were the forces which the Great King reviewed, passing through the land forces in his chariot, and through the fleet in a Sidonian vessel, beneath a golden canopy. After his survey, the king summoned Demaratus to his presence.

"Think you," said he, "that the Greeks will presume to resist me?"

"Sire," answered the Spartan, "your proposition of servitude will be rejected by the Greeks; and even if the rest of them sided with you, Lacedæmon still would give you battle; question not in what numbers; had Sparta but a thousand men she would oppose you."

Marching onward, and forcibly enlisting, by the way, various tribes through which he passed, exhausting many streams, and impoverishing the population condemned to entertain his army, Xerxes arrived at Acanthus: there he dismissed the commanders of his fleet, ordering them to wait his orders at Thermë, a small town which gave its name to the Thermean Gulf, (to which they proceeded, pressing ships and seamen by the way,) and afterwards gaining Thermë himself, encamped his army on the coast, spreading far and wide its multitudinous array from Thermë and Mygdonia to the rivers Lydias and Haliacmon.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONDUCT OF THE GREEKS—THE ORACLE RELATING TO SALAMIS—ART OF THEMISTOCLES—THE ISTHMIAN CONGRESS—EMBASSIES TO ARGOS, CRETE, CORCYRA AND SYRACUSE—THEIR ILL SUCCESS—THE THESSALIANS SEND ENVOYS TO THE ISTHMUS—THE GREEKS ADVANCE TO TEMPË, BUT RETREAT—THE FLEET DESPATCHED TO ARTEMISIUM, AND THE PASS OF THERMOPYLÆ OCCUPIED—NUMBERS OF THE GRECIAN FLEET—BATTLE OF THERMOPYLÆ.

I. The first preparations of the Persians did not produce the effect which might have been anticipated in the Grecian states. Far from uniting against the common foe, they still cherished a frivolous and unreasonable jealousy of each other. Several readily sent the symbols of their allegiance to the Persian, including the whole of Bœotia, except only the Thespians and Platæans. The more timorous states imagined themselves safe from the vengeance of the Barbarian; the more resolute were overwhelmed with dismay. The renown of the Median arms was universally acknowledged: for in spite of Marathon, Greece had not yet learnt to despise the foreigner; and the enormous force of the impending armament was accurately known from the spies and deserters of the Grecian states, who abounded in the Barbarian camp. Even united, the whole navy of Greece seemed insufficient to contend against such a foe; and, divided amongst themselves, several of the states were disposed rather to succumb than to resist.* "And here," says the father of history, "I feel compelled to assert an opinion, however invidious it may be to many. If the Athenians, terrified by the danger, had forsaken their country, or submitted to the Persian, Xerxes would have met with no resistance by sea. The Lacedæmonians, deserted by their allies, would have died with honour or yielded from necessity, and all Greece have been reduced to the Persian yoke. The Athenians were thus the deliverers of Greece. They animated the ardour of those states yet faithful to themselves; and next to the gods, they were the true repellers of the invader. Even the Delphic oracles, dark and ominous as they were, did not shake their purpose, nor induce them to abandon Greece."—When even the deities themselves seemed doubtful, Athens was unshaken. The messengers despatched by the Athenians to the Delphic oracle received indeed an answer well calculated to appal them.

"Unhappy men," cried the priestess, "leave your houses and the ramparts of the city, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. Fire and keen Mars compelling the Syrian chariot, shall destroy, towers shall beover thrown, and temples destroyed by fire. Lo! now, even now, they stand dropping sweat, and their house-tops black with blood, and shaking with prophetic awe—Depart and prepare for ill!"

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* Her. lib. vii. c. 138.

II. Cast into the deepest affliction by this response, the Athenians yet, with the garb and symbols of suppliants, renewed their application. "Answer us," they said, "O supreme God, answer us more propitiously, or we will not depart from your sanctuary, but remain here even until death."

The second answer seemed less severe than the first: "Minerva is unable to appease the Olympian Jupiter. Again, therefore, I speak, and my words are as adamant. All else within the bounds of Cecropia and the bosom of the divine Cithæron, shall fall and fail you. The wooden wall alone Jupiter grants to Pallas, a refuge to your children and yourselves, Wait not for horse and foot—tarry not the march of the mighty army—retreat, even though they close upon you. O Salamis the divine, thou shalt lose the sons of women, whether Ceres scatter or hoard her harvest!"

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III. Writing down this reply, the messengers returned to Athens. Many and contradictory were the attempts made to interpret the response; some believed that by a wooden wall was meant the citadel, formerly surrounded by a palisade of wood. Others affirmed that the enigmatical expression signified the fleet. But then the concluding words perplexed them. For the apostrophe to Salamis appeared to denote destruction and defeat. At this juncture Themistocles approved himself worthy of the position he had attained. It is probable that he had purchased the oracle to which he found a ready and bold solution. He upheld the resort to the ships, but denied that in the apostrophe to Salamis any evil to Athens was denounced. "Had," said he, "the prediction of loss and slaughter referred to the Athenians, would Salamis have been called "divine?" would it not have been rather called the "wretched" if the Greeks were doomed to perish near that isle? The oracle threatens not the Athenians but the enemy. Let us prepare then to engage the Barbarian by sea. Our ships are our wooden walls."

This interpretation, as it was the more encouraging, so it was the more approved. The vessels already built from the revenues of the mines of Laurion, were now destined to the safety of Greece.

IV. It was, however, before the arrival of the Persian envoys,* and when the Greeks first woke to the certainty, that the vast preparations of Xerxes menaced Greece as the earliest victim, that a congress, perhaps at the onset confined to the Peloponnesian states, met at Corinth. At the head of this confederate council, necessarily ranked Sparta, which was the master state of the Peloponnesus. But in policy and debate, if not in arms, she appears always to have met with a powerful rival in Corinth, the diplomacy of whose wealthy and liberal commonwealth often counteracted the propositions of the Spartan delegates. To this congress subsequently came the envoys of all the states that refused tribute and homage to the Persian king. The institution of this Hellenic council, which was one cause of the salvation of Greece, is a proof of the political impotence of the old Amphictyonic league. The Synedrion of Corinth, (or rather of that Corinthian village that had grown up round the temple of Neptune, and is styled the ISTHMUS by the Greek writers,) was the true historical Amphictyony of Hellas.

In the Isthmian Congress the genius of Themistocles found an ampler sphere than it had hitherto done amongst the noisy cabals of Athens.

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* Müller on the Greek Congress.

Of all the Greek delegates, that sagacious statesman was most successful in accomplishing the primary object of the confederacy, viz. in removing the jealousies and the dissensions that hitherto existed amongst the states which composed it. In this, perhaps the most difficult, as the most essential, task, Themistocles was aided by a Tegean, named Chileus, who, though he rarely appears upon the external stage of action, seems to have been eminently skilled in the intricate and entangled politics of the time. Themistocles, into whose hands the Athenian republic, at this period, confided the trust not more of its interests than its resentments, set the example of concord; and Athens, for awhile, consented to reconciliation and amity with the hated Ægina. All the proceedings of this illustrious congress were characterized by vigilant prudence and decisive energy. As soon as Xerxes arrived in Sardis, emissaries were despatched to watch the movements of the Persian army, and at the same period, or rather some time before,* ambassadors were sent to Corcyra, Crete, Argos, and to Syracuse then under the dominion of Gelo. This man, from the station of a high-born and powerful citizen of Gela, in Sicily, had raised himself partly by military talents, principally by a profound and dissimulating policy, to the tyranny of Gela and of Syracuse. His abilities were remarkable, his power great; nor on the Grecian continent was there one state that could command the force and the resources that were at the disposal of the Syracusan prince.

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* Müller on the Greek Congress.

The spies despatched to Sardis were discovered, seized, and would have been put to death, but for the interference of Xerxes, who dismissed them, after directing them to be led round his army, in the hope that their return from the terror of such a spectacle would, more than their death, intimidate and appal their countrymen.

The mission to Argos, which, as a Peloponnesian city, was one of the earliest applied to, was unsuccessful. That state still suffered the exhaustion which followed the horrible massacre perpetrated by Cleomenes, the Spartan king, who had burnt six thousand Argives in the precincts of the sanctuary to which they had fled. New changes of government had followed this fatal loss, and the servile population had been enabled to seize the privileges of the free. Thus, hatred to Sparta, a weakened soldiery, an unsettled internal government, all conspired to render Argos lukewarm to the general cause. Yet that state did not openly refuse the aid which it secretly resolved to withhold. It consented to join the common league upon two conditions; an equal share with the Spartans in the command, and a truce of thirty years with those crafty and merciless neighbours. The Spartans proposed to compromise the former condition by allowing to the Argive king not indeed half the command, but a voice equal to that of each of their own kings. To the latter condition they offered no objection. Glad of an excuse to retaliate on the Spartans their own haughty insolence, the Argives at once rejected the proposition, and ordered the Spartan ambassador to quit their territories before sunset. But Argos, though the chief city of Argolis, had not her customary influence over the other towns of that district, in which the attachment to Greece was stronger than the jealous apprehensions of Sparta.

The embassy to Sicily was not more successful than that to Argos. Gelo agreed indeed to furnish the allies with a considerable force, but only on the condition of obtaining for Sicily the supreme command, either of the land force claimed by Sparta, or of the naval force to which Athens already ventured to pretend;—an offer to which it was impossible that the Greeks should accede, unless they were disposed to surrender to the craft of an auxiliary the liberties they asserted against the violence of a foe. The Spartan and the Athenian ambassadors alike, and with equal indignation, rejected the proposals of Gelo, who, in fact, had obtained the tyranny of his native city, by first securing the command of the Gelan cavalry. The prince of Syracuse was little affected by the vehement scorn of the ambassadors. "I see you are in more want of troops than commanders," said he wittily. "Return then, tell the Greeks this year will be without its spring." For as the spring to the year did Gelo consider his assistance to Greece. From Sicily the ambassadors repaired to Corcyra. Here they were amused by flattering promises, but the governors of that intriguing and factious state fitted out a fleet of sixty vessels, stationed near Pylos, off the coast of Sparta, to wait the issue of events, assuring Xerxes on the one hand of their indisposition to oppose him, and pretending afterwards to the Greeks, on the other, that the adverse winds alone prevented their taking share in the engagement at Salamis. The Cretans were not more disposed to the cause than the Corcyræans; they found an excuse in an oracle of Delphi, and indeed that venerable shrine appears to have been equally dissuasive of resistance to all the states that consulted it; although the daring of the

Athenians had construed the ambiguous menace into a favourable omen. The threats of superstition become but incitements to courage when interpreted by the brave.

V. And now the hostile army had crossed the Hellespont, and the Thessalians perceiving that they were the next objects of attack, despatched ambassadors to the congress at the Isthmus.

Those Thessalian chiefs called the Aleuadæ, had, it is true, invited Xerxes to the invasion of Greece. But precisely because acceptable to the chiefs, the arrival of the Great King was dreaded by the people. By the aid of the Persians, the Aleuadæ trusted to extend their power over their own country,—an ambition with which it is not to be supposed that the people they assisted to subject would sympathize. Accordingly, while Xerxes was to the chiefs an ally, to the people he remained a foe.

These Thessalian envoys proclaimed their willingness to assist the confederates in the defence of their Father-land, but represented the imminence of the danger to Thessaly, and demanded an immediate supply of forces. "Without this," they said, "we cannot exert ourselves for you, and our inability to assist you will be our excuse, if we provide for our own safety."

Aroused by these exhortations, the confederates

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commenced their military movements. A body of infantry passed the Euripus, entered Thessaly, and encamped amidst the delights of the vale of Tempe. Here their numbers, in all ten thousand heavy-armed troops, were joined by the Thessalian horse. The Spartans were led by Euænetus. Themistocles commanded the Athenians. The army did not long, however, remain in the encampment. Alexander, the king of Macedon, sent confidentially advising their retreat, and explaining accurately the force of the enemy. This advice concurred with the discovery that there was another passage into Thessaly through the higher regions of Macedonia, which exposed them to be taken in the rear: And, in truth, it was through this passage that the Persian army ultimately marched. The Greeks, therefore, broke up the camp and returned to the Isthmus. The Thessalians, thus abandoned, instantly treated with the invader, and became among the staunchest allies of Xerxes.

It was now finally agreed in the Isthmian Congress, that the most advisable plan would be to defend the Pass of Thermopylæ, as being both nearer and narrower than that of Thessaly. The fleet they resolved to send to Artemisium on the coast of Histiæotis, a place sufficiently

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neighbouring Thermopylæ, to allow of easy communication. Never, perhaps, have the Greeks shown more military skill than in the choice of these stations. But one pass in those mountainous districts permitted the descent of the Persian army from Thessaly—bounded to the west by steep and inaccessible cliffs, extending as far as mount Œta;—to the east by shoals and the neighbouring sea. This defile received its name Thermopylæ, or Hot Gates, from the hot-springs which rose near the base of the mountain. In remote times the pastoral Phocians had fortified the place against the incursions of the Thessalians, and the decayed remains of the wall and gates of their ancient garrison were still existent in the middle of the pass; while, by marsh and morass, to render the place yet more impassable, they had suffered the hot-springs to empty themselves along the plain, on the Thessalian side, and the quagmire was still sodden and unsteady. The country on either side the Thermopylæ was so contracted, that before, near the river Phœnix, and behind, near the village of Alpeni, was at that time space only for a single chariot. In such a pass the numbers and the cavalry of the Mede were rendered unavailable; while at the distance of about fifteen miles from Thermopylæ, the ships of the

Grecian navy rode in the narrow sea, off the projecting shores of Eubœa, equally fortunate in a station which weakened the force of numbers and allowed the facility of retreat.

The sea-station was possessed by the allied ships. Corinth sent forty; Megara twenty; Ægina eighteen; Sicyon twelve; Sparta ten; the Epidaurians contributed eight; the Eretrians seven; the Trœzenians, five; the Ityræans and the people of Ceos each two, and the Opuntian Locrians, seven vessels of fifty oars. The total of these ships, (without reckoning those of fifty oars, supplied by the Locrians, and two barks of the same description, which added to the quota sent by the people of Ceos,) amount to one hundred and twenty-four. The Athenian force, alone, numbered more vessels than all the other confederates, and contributed one hundred and twenty-seven triremes, partly manned by Platæans, besides twenty vessels lent to the Chalcidians, who equipped and manned them. The Athenian fleet was commanded by Themistocles. The land force at Thermopylæ consisted chiefly of Peloponnesians: its numbers were as follows:—three hundred heavy-armed Spartans; five hundred Tegeans; five hundred Mantinæans; one hundred and twenty Orchomenians; one thousand from the

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other states of Arcady; two hundred from Phlius; eighty from Mycenæ. Bœotia contributed seven hundred Thespians, and four hundred Thebans; the last had been specially selected by Leonidas, the Spartan chief, because of the general suspicion that the Thebans were attached to the Medes, and he desired, therefore, to approve them as friends, or know them as foes. Although the sentiments of the Thebans were hostile, says Herodotus, they sent the assistance required. In addition to these, were one thousand Phocians, and a band of the Opuntian Locrians, unnumbered by Herodotus, but variously estimated, by Diodorus at one thousand, and more probably, by Pausanias at no less than seven thousand.

The chief command was entrusted, according to the claims of Sparta, to Leonidas, the younger brother of the frantic Cleomenes,* by a different mother, and his successor to the Spartan throne.

There are men whose whole life is in a single action. Of these, Leonidas is the most eminent.

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* Anaxandrides, king of Sparta, and father of Cleomenes and Leonidas, had married his niece: she was barren. The Ephors persuaded him to take another wife; he did so, and by the second wife, Cleomenes was born. Almost at the same time, the first wife, hitherto barren, proved with child. And as she continued the conjugal connexion, in process of time

We know little of him, until the last few days of his career. He seems, as it were, born but to show how much glory belongs to a brave death. Of his character or genius, his general virtues and vices, his sorrows and his joys, biography can scarcely gather even the materials for conjecture. He passed from an obscure existence into an everlasting name. And history dedicates her proudest pages to one of whom she has nothing but the epitaph to relate.

As if to contrast the little band under the command of Leonidas, Herodotus again enumerates the Persian force, swelled as it now was by many contributions, forced and voluntary, since its departure from Doriscus. He estimates the total by sea and land, thus augmented, at two millions six hundred and forty-one thousand six hundred and ten fighting men, and computes the number of the menial attendants, the motley multitude that followed the armament, at an equal number; so that the son of Darius conducted, hitherto without disaster, to Sepias and Thermopylæ, a body of five millions two hundred and eighty-three thousand

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three sons were born; of these, Leonidas was the second. But Cleomenes, though the offspring of the second wife, came into the world before the children by the first wife, and therefore had the prior right to the throne.

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two hundred and twenty human beings.* And out of this wondrous concourse, none in majesty and grace of person, says Herodotus, surpassed the royal leader. But such advantages as belong to superior stature the kings of Persia obtained by artificial means, and we learn from Xenophon, that they wore a peculiar kind of shoe so constructed as to increase their height.

VI. The fleet of Xerxes, moving from Thermë, obtained some partial success at sea : ten of their vessels despatched to Sciathos, captured a guard-ship of Trœzene, and sacrificed upon the prow a Greek named Leon ; the beauty of his person obtained him that disagreeable preference. A vessel of Ægina fell also into their hands, the crew of which they treated as slaves, save only one hero, Pytheas, endeared even to the enemy by his valour ; a third vessel, belonging to the Athenians, was taken at the mouth of the Peneus; the seamen, however, had previously debarked, and consequently escaped. Beacons apprized the Greek station at Artemisium of these disasters, and the fleet retreated for a while to Chalcis, with a view of guarding the Euripus. But a violent storm off the coast of Magnesia suddenly destroying no less than four hundred of the barbarian vessels, with a considerable number of men and great treasure, the Grecian navy returned to Artemisium.

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* It is impossible by any calculations to render this amount more credible to modern scepticism. It is extremely likely that Herodotus is mistaken in his calculation ; but who shall correct him ?

Here they soon made a capture of fifteen of the Persian vessels, which, taking them for friends, sailed right into the midst of them. With this exception the rest of the Barbarian fleet arrived safely at Aphetæ.

VII. Meanwhile the mighty land force of the Great King, passing through Thessaly and Achaia, arrived at last at the wide Trachinian plains, which stretching along the shores of Thessaly, forty miles in circumference, and adjacent to the straits of Thermopylæ, allowed space for the encampment of his army.

The Greeks at Thermopylæ beheld the approach of Xerxes with dismay; they had anticipated considerable reinforcements from the confederate states, especially Sparta, which last had determined to commit all her strength to the campaign, leaving merely a small detachment for the defence of the capital. But the Carneian festival in honour of the great Dorian Apollo, at Sparta, detained the Lacedæmonians, and the Olympic games diverted the rest of the allies, not yet expecting an immediate battle.

The vicinity of Xerxes, the absence of the reinforcements they expected, produced an alarmed and anxious council; Leonidas dissuaded the confederates from retreat, and despatched messengers to the various states urging the necessity of supplies, and stating the hopelessness of opposing the Mede effectually with the present forces.

Xerxes, in the meanwhile, who had heard that an insignificant band were assembled under a Spartan descendant of Hercules, to resist his progress, despatched a spy to reconnoitre their number and their movements. The emissary was able only to inspect those without the entrenchment, who, at that time, happened to be the Spartans; he found that singular race engaged in gymnastic exercises, and dressing their long hair for the festival of battle. Although they perceived the spy, they suffered him to gaze at his leisure, and he returned in safety to the king.

Much astonished at the account he received, Xerxes sent for Demaratus, and detailing to him what the messenger had seen, inquired what it might portend, and whether this handful of men amusing themselves in the defile could seriously mean to resist his arms.

"Sire," answered the Spartan, "it is their intention to dispute the pass, and what your messenger has seen proves that they are preparing accordingly. It is the custom of the Spartans to adorn their hair on the eve of any enterprise of danger. You are advancing to attack the flower of the Grecian valour." Xerxes, still incredulous that opposition could be seriously intended, had the courtesy to wait four days to give the enemy leisure to retreat;—in the interim he despatched a messenger to Leonidas, demanding his arms. "Come and take them!" replied the Spartan.

VIII. On the fifth day the patience of Xerxes was exhausted, and he sent a detachment of Medes and Cissians* into the pass with orders to bring its rash and obstinate defenders alive into his presence. The Medes and Cissians were repulsed with considerable loss. "The Immortal Band" were now ordered to advance under the command of Hydarnes. But even the skill and courage of that warlike troop were equally unsuccessful, their numbers were crippled by the narrowness of the pass, and their short weapons coped to great disadvantage with the long spears of the Greeks. The engagement was renewed a second day, with the like fortune; the loss of the Persians was great, although the scanty numbers of the Spartans were also somewhat diminished.

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* The Cissii, or Cissians, inhabited the then fertile province of Susiana, in which was situated the capital of Susa. They resembled the Persians in dress and manners.

In the midst of the perplexity which pervaded the king's councils after this defeat, there arrived at the Persian camp one Ephialtes, a Malian. Influenced by the hope of a great reward, this traitor demanded and obtained an audience, in which he offered to conduct the Medes through a secret path across the mountains, into the pass. The offer was joyfully accepted, and Hydarnes, with the forces under his command, was despatched under the guidance of the Malian. At the dusk of evening the detachment left the camp, and marching all night, from the river Asopus, between the mountains of Œta on the right hand, and the Trachinian ridges on the left, they found themselves, at the early dawn, at the summit of the hill, on which a thousand Phocians had been stationed to defend the pass, for it was not unknown to the Spartans. In the silence of dawn, they wound through the thick groves of oak that clad the ascent, and concealed the glitter of their arms ; but the exceeding stillness of the air occasioned the noise they made in trampling on the leaves,* to reach the ears of the Phocians. That band sprang up from the earth on which they had slept, to the consternation and surprise of the invaders, and precipitately betook themselves to arms. The Persians, though unprepared for an enemy at this spot, drew up in battle array, and the heavy onslaught of their arrows drove the Phocians to seek a better shelter up the mountains, not imagining that the passage into the defile, but their own destruction, was the object of the enterprise. The Persians prudently forbore pursuit, but availing themselves of the path now open to their progress, rapidly descended the opposite side of the mountain.

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* So Herodotus (lib. vii. c. 218;)—but, as it was summer, the noise was probably made rather by the boughs that obstructed the path of the barbarians, than by leaves on the ground.

IX. Meanwhile, dark and superstitious terrors were at work in the Grecian camp. The preceding eve the soothsayer (Megistias) had inspected the entrails and foretold that death awaited the defenders of Thermopylæ in the morning, and on that fatal night a Cumæan deserter* from the Persian camp had joined Leonidas, and informed him of the treachery of Ephialtes. At early day their fears were confirmed by the sentinels posted on the mountains, who fled into the defile at the approach of the Barbarians.

A hasty council was assembled; some were for remaining, some for flight. The council ended with the resolution of a general retreat, probably with the assent, possibly by the instances, of Leonidas, who was contented to possess the monopoly of glory and of death. The laws of the Spartans forbade them to fly from any enemy, however numerous, and Leonidas did not venture to disobey them. Perhaps his resolution was strengthened by an oracle of that Delphi so peculiarly venerated by the Dorian race, and which foretold either the fall of Sparta, or the sacrifice of a Spartan king of the blood of Hercules. To men whose whole happiness was renown, life had no temptation equal to such a death!

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* Diod. Sic. xi. viii.

X. Leonidas and his countrymen determined to keep the field. The Thespians alone *voluntarily* remained to partake his fate; but he detained also the suspected Thebans, rather as a hostage than an auxiliary. The rest of the confederates precipitately departed across the mountains to their native cities. Leonidas would have dismissed the prophetic soothsayer, but Megistias insisted on his right to remain; he contented himself with sending away his only son, who had accompanied the expedition. Even the stern spirit of Leonidas is said to have yielded to the voice of nature; and he ordered two of his relations to return to

Sparta to report the state of affairs. "You prescribe to us the duties of messengers, not of soldiers," was the reply, as the warriors buckled on their shields, and took their posts with the rest.

If history could penetrate from events into the hearts of the agents, it would be interesting even to conjecture the feelings of this devoted band, awaiting the approach of a certain death, in that solitary defile. Their enthusiasm, and that rigid and Spartan spirit, which had made all ties subservient to obedience to the law—all excitement tame to that of battle—all pleasure dull to the anticipation of glory,—probably rendered the hours preceding death the most enviable of their lives. They might have exulted in the same elevating fanaticism which distinguished afterwards the followers of Mahomet; and seen that opening paradise in immortality below, which the Moslemin beheld in anticipation above.

XI. Early on that awful morning, Xerxes offered a solemn libation to his Gods, and at the middle of the noon, when Hydarnes might be supposed to be close upon the rear of the enemy, the Barbarian troops commenced their march. Leonidas and his band advanced beyond their entrenchment, into the broader part of the defile. Before the fury of their despair, the Persians fell in great numbers, many of them were hurled into the sea, others trodden down and crushed by the press of their own numbers.

When the spears of the Greeks were shivered in pieces, they had recourse to their swords, and the battle was fought hand to hand: Thus fighting, fell Leonidas, surrounded in death by many of his band, of various distinction and renown. Two half-brothers of Xerxes, mingling in the foremost of the fray, contended for the body of the Spartan king; and perished by the Grecian sword.

For a short time the Spartans repelled the Persian crowd, who, where valour failed to urge them on, were scourged to the charge by the lash of their leaders, and drew the body of Leonidas from the press; and now, winding down the pass, Hydarnes and his detachment descended to the battle. The scene then became changed, the Spartans retired, still undaunted, or rather made yet more desperate as death drew near, into the narrowest of the pass, and, ranged upon an eminence of the strait, they died — fighting, even after their weapons were broken, with their hands and teeth—rather crushed beneath the number, than slain by the swords of the foe,—"*non victi sed vincendo fatigati.*"[*]

XII. Two Spartans of the three hundred, Eurytus and Aristodemus, had, in consequence of a severe disorder in the eyes, been permitted to sojourn at Alpeni; but Eurytus, hearing of the contest, was led by his helot into the field, and died with his countrymen. Aristodemus alone remained, branded with disgrace on his return to Sparta; but subsequently redeeming his name at the battle of Platæa.[†]

The Thebans, beholding the victory of the Persians, yielded their arms; and, excepting a few, slain as they approached, not as foes but as suppliants, were pardoned by Xerxes.

The king himself came to view the dead, and especially the corpse of Leonidas. He ordered the head of that hero to be cut off, and his body suspended on a cross,[‡] an instance of sudden passion, rather than customary barbarity. For of all nations the Persians most honoured valour, even in their foes.

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[*] Justin, ii. ix.

[†] Another Spartan, who had been sent into Thessaly, and was therefore absent from the slaughter of Thermopylæ, destroyed himself.

[‡] The cross was the usual punishment in Persia, for offences against the king's majesty or rights. Perhaps, therefore, Xerxes, by the outrage, only desired to signify that he considered the Spartan as a rebel.

XIII. The moral sense of mankind which places the example of self-sacrifice among the noblest lessons by which our nature can be corrected, has justly immortalized the memory of Leonidas. It is impossible to question the virtue of the man, but we may fairly dispute the wisdom of the system he adorned. We may doubt whether, in fact, his death served his country so much as his life would have done. It was the distinction of Thermopylæ, that its heroes died in obedience to the laws; it was the distinction of Marathon, that its heroes lived to defeat the invader and preserve their country. And in proof of this distinction, we find afterwards, at Platæa, that of all the allied Greeks the Spartans the most feared the conquerors of Thermopylæ; the Athenians the least feared the fugitives of Marathon.

XIV. Subsequently, on the hill to which the Spartans and Thespians had finally retired, a lion of stone was erected by the Amphictyons, in honour of Leonidas; and many years afterwards the bones of that hero were removed to Sparta, and yearly games, at which Spartans only were allowed to contend, were celebrated round his tomb. Separate monuments to the Greeks generally, and to the three hundred who had refused to retreat, were built also, by the Amphictyons, at Thermopylæ. Long extant, posterity admired the inscriptions which they bore; that of the Spartans became proverbial for its sublime conciseness.

"Go, stranger," it said, "and tell the Spartans that we obeyed the law—and lie here!"

The private friendship of Simonides the poet erected also a monument to Megistias, the soothsayer, in which it was said truly to his honour,

"That the fate he foresaw, he remained to brave."

Such is the history of the battle of Thermopylæ.* B.C. 480.

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* "Thus fought the Greeks at Thermopylæ," are the simple expressions of Herodotus, lib. vii. c. 234.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ADVICE OF DEMARATUS TO XERXES—THEMISTOCLES—ACTIONS OFF ARTEMISIUM—THE GREEKS RETREAT—THE PERSIANS INVADE DELPHI, AND ARE REPULSED WITH GREAT LOSS—THE ATHENIANS, UNAIDED BY THEIR ALLIES, ABANDON ATHENS, AND EMBARK FOR SALAMIS—THE IRRESOLUTE AND SELFISH POLICY OF THE PELOPONNESIANS—DEXTERITY AND FIRMNESS OF THEMISTOCLES—BATTLE OF SALAMIS—ANDROS AND CARYSTUS BESIEGED BY THE GREEKS—ANECDOTES OF THEMISTOCLES—HONOURS AWARDED TO HIM IN SPARTA—XERXES RETURNS TO ASIA—OLYNTHUS AND POTIDÆA BESIEGED BY ARTABAZUS—THE ATHENIANS RETURN HOME—THE OSTRACISM OF ARISTIDES IS REPEALED.

I. After the victory of Thermopylæ, Demaratus advised the Persian monarch to despatch a detachment of three hundred vessels to the Laconian coast, and seize the island of Cythera, of which a Spartan once, (foreseeing how easily hereafter that post might be made to command and overawe the Laconian capital,) had said, "It were better for Sparta if it were sunk into the sea." The profound experience of Demaratus in the selfish and exclusive policy of his countrymen, made him argue that, if this were done, the fears of Sparta for herself would prevent her joining the forces of the rest of Greece, and leave the latter a more easy prey to the invader.

The advice, fortunately for the Greeks, was over-ruled by Achæmenes.

Meanwhile the Grecian navy, assembled off Artemisium, was agitated by divers councils. Beholding the vast number of Barbarian ships now collected at Aphetæ, and the whole shores around swarming with hostile troops, the Greeks debated the necessity of retreat.

The fleet was under the command of Eurybiades, the Spartan. For although Athens furnished a force equal to all the rest of the allies together, and might justly therefore have pretended to the command, yet the jealousy of the confederates, long accustomed to yield to the claims of Sparta, and unwilling to acknowledge a new superiority in another state, had induced the Athenians readily to forego their claim. And this especially at the instance of Themistocles. "To him," says Plutarch, "Greece not only owes her preservation, but the Athenians in particular the glory of surpassing their enemies in valour, and their allies in moderation." But if fortune gave Eurybiades the nominal command, genius forced Themistocles into the actual pre-eminence. That extraordinary man was, above all, adapted to his time; and, suited to its necessities, he commanded its fates. His very fault in the callousness of the moral sentiment, and his unscrupulous regard to expediency, peculiarly aided him in his management of men. He could appeal to the noblest passions—he could wind himself into the most base. Where he could not exalt he corrupted, where he could not persuade he intimidated, where he could not intimidate he bribed.*

When the intention to retreat became generally circulated, the inhabitants of the northern coast of Eubœa (off which the Athenian navy rode) entreated Eurybiades at least to give them time to remove their slaves and children from the vengeance of the Barbarian. Unsuccessful with him, they next sought Themistocles. For the consideration of thirty talents,

* Thus the command of the Athenian forces was at one time likely to fall upon Epicydes, a man whose superior eloquence had gained an ascendancy with the people, which was neither due to his integrity nor to his military skill. Themistocles is said to have bribed him to forego his pretensions. Themistocles could be as severe as crafty when occasion demanded: he put to death an interpreter who accompanied the Persian envoys, probably to the congress at the Isthmus,[1] for debasing the language of free Greeks to express the demands of the Barbarian enemy.

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[1] Plutarch implies that these envoys came to Athens, but Xerxes sent none to that city.

the Athenian promised to remain at Artemisium, and risk the event of battle. Possessed of this sum, he won over the sturdy Spartan by the gift of five talents, and to Adimantus the Corinthian, the most obstinate in retreat, he privately sent three.* The remainder he kept for his own uses;—distinguished from his compeers in this—that he obtained a much larger share of the gift than they;—that they were bribed to be brave, and that he was rewarded for bribing them. The pure-minded statesman of the closet cannot but feel some disdain and some regret to find, blent together, the noblest actions and the paltriest motives. But whether in ancient times or in modern, the web of human affairs is woven from a mingled yarn, and the individuals who save nations are not always those most acceptable to the moralist. The share of Themistocles in this business is not, however, so much to his discredit as to that of the Spartan Eurybiades. We cannot but observe that no system contrary to human nature is strong against actual temptation. The Spartan law interdicted the desire of riches, and the Spartans themselves yielded far more easily to the lust of avarice than the luxurious Athenians. Thus a native of Zelea, a city in Asia Minor, had sought to corrupt the Peloponnesian cities by Persian gold: it was not the Spartans, it was the Athenians, who declared this man infamous, and placed his life out of the pale of the Grecian law. With a noble pride Demosthenes speaks of this decree. "The gold," he says, "was brought into Peloponnesus, not to Athens. But our ancestors extended their care beyond their own city to the whole of Greece."[*] An Aristides is formed by the respect paid to integrity, which society tries in vain—a Demaratus, an Eurybiades, and, as we shall see, a Pausanias, by the laws which, affecting to exclude the influence of the passions, render their temptations novel, and their effects irresistible.

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* Plutarch rejects this story, very circumstantially told by Herodotus, without adducing a single satisfactory argument for the rejection. The scepticism of Plutarch is more frivolous even than his credulity.

II. The Greeks continued at Eubœa; and the Persians, eager to engage so inconsiderable an enemy, despatched two hundred chosen vessels, with orders to make a circuitous route beyond Sciathos, and thus, unperceived, to attack the Grecian rear, while on a concerted signal the rest would advance upon the front.

A deserter of Scios escaped, however, from Aphetæ, and informed the Greeks of the Persian plan. Upon this it was resolved at midnight to advance against that part of the fleet which had been sent around Eubœa. But as twilight approached, they appear to have changed or delayed this design, and proceeded at once towards the main body of the fleet, less perhaps with the intention of giving regular battle, than of attempting such detached skirmishes as would make experiment of their hardihood and skill. The Persians, amazed at the infatuation of their opponents, drew out their fleet in order, and succeeded in surrounding the Greek ships. The night, however, separated the hostile forces, but not until the Greeks had captured thirty of the Barbarian vessels; the first ship was taken by an Athenian. The victory, however, despite this advantage, was undecided, when the Greeks returned to Artemisium, the Persians to Aphetæ.

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[*] Demost. Philip. 3. See also Æschines contra Ctesiphon.

III. But during the night one of those sudden and vehement storms not unfrequent to the summers of Greece, broke over the seas. The Persians at Aphetæ heard, with a panic dismay, the continued thunder that burst above the summit of Mount Pelion; and the bodies of the dead and the wrecks of ships, floating round the prows, entangled their oars amidst a tempestuous and heavy sea. But the destruction which the Persians at Aphetæ anticipated to themselves, actually came upon that part of the Barbarian fleet which had made the circuit round Eubœa. Remote from land, exposed to all the fury of the tempest, ignorant of their course, and amidst the darkness of night, they were dashed to pieces against those fearful rocks termed "The Hollows," and not a single galley escaped the general destruction.

Thus the fleet of the Barbarians was rendered more equal to that of the Greeks. Reinforced by fifty-three ships from Athens the next day, the Greeks proceeded at evening against that part of the hostile navy possessed by the Cilicians. These they utterly defeated, and returned joyfully to Artemisium.

Hitherto these skirmishes, made on the summer evenings, in order probably to take advantage of the darkening night to break off before any irremediable loss was sustained, seem rather to have been for the sake of practice in the war—chivalric sorties as it were—than actual and deliberate engagements. But the third day, the Persians, impatient of conquest, advanced to Artemisium. These sea encounters were made precisely on the same days as the conflicts at Thermopylæ; the object on each was the same—the gaining in one of the sea defile, in the other of the land entrance into Greece. The Euripus was the Thermopylæ of the ocean.

IV. The Greeks remained in their station, and there met the shock; the battle was severe and equal: the Persians fought with great valour and firmness, and although the loss upon their side was far the greatest, many of the Greek vessels also perished. They separated as by mutual consent, neither force the victor. Of the Persian fleet the Ægyptians were the most distinguished—of the Grecian the Athenians; and of the last none equalled in valour Clinias;—his ship was manned at his own expense. He was the father of that Alcibiades, afterwards so famous.

B. C. 480.

While the Greeks rested at Artemisium, counting the number of their slain, and amidst the wrecks of their vessels, they learnt the fate of Leonidas.* This determined their previous consultations on the policy of retreat, and they abandoned the Euripus in steady and marshalled order, the Corinthians first, the Athenians closing the rear. Thus the Persians were left masters of the sea and land entrance into Greece.

But even in retreat, the active spirit of Themistocles was intent upon expedients. It was more than suspected that a considerable portion of the Ionians now in the service of Xerxes, were secretly friendly to the Greeks. In the swiftest of the Athenian vessels Themistocles therefore repaired to a watering place on the coast, and engraved upon the rocks these words, which were read by the Ionians the next day.

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* I have said that it might be doubted whether the death of Leonidas was as serviceable to Greece as his life might have been; its immediate consequences were certainly discouraging. If his valour was an example, his defeat was a warning.

"Men of Ionia, in fighting against your ancestors, and assisting to enslave Greece, you act unworthily. Come over to us; or if that may not be, at least retire from the contest, and prevail on the Carians to do the same. If yet neither secession nor revolt be practicable, at least when we come to action exert not yourselves against us. Remember that we are descended from one common race, and that it was on your behalf that we first incurred the enmity of the Persian."

A subtler intention than that which was the more obvious, was couched beneath this exhortation. For if it failed to seduce the Ionians, it might yet induce Xerxes to mistrust their alliance.

When the Persians learnt that the Greeks had abandoned their station, their whole fleet took possession of the pass, possessed themselves of the neighbouring town of Histiæa, and over-running a part of the isle of Eubœa, received the submission of the inhabitants.

Xerxes now had recourse to a somewhat clumsy though a very commonly practised artifice. Twenty thousand of his men had fallen at Thermopylæ: of these he buried nineteen thousand, and leaving the remainder uninterred, he invited all who desired it, by public proclamation, to examine the scene of contest. As a considerable number of helots had joined their Spartan lords, and perished with them, the bodies of the slain amounted to four thousand,* while those of the Persians were only one thousand. This was a practical despotic bulletin.

* There were[1] three hundred Spartans and four hundred Thespians; supposing that (as it has been asserted) the eighty warriors of Mycenæ also remained with Leonidas, and that one hundred, or a fourth of the Thebans fell, ere their submission was received, this makes a total of eight hundred and eighty. If we take now what at Platæa was the actual ratio of the helots as compared with the Spartans, *i. e*, seven to one, we shall add two thousand one hundred helots, which make two thousand nine hundred and ninety; to which must be added such of the Greeks as fell in the attacks prior to the slaughter of Thermopylæ; so that, in order to make out the total of the slain given by Herodotus, more than eleven hundred must have perished before the last action, in which Leonidas fell.

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[1] Three hundred, for the sake of round numbers—but one of the three hundred—perhaps two—survived the general massacre.

BOOK III. CHAP. VII.

V. Of all the neighbouring district, the Phocians had alone remained faithful to the Grecian cause: their territory was now over-run by the Persians, at the instance of their hereditary enemies, the Thessalians, destroying city and temple, and committing all the horrors of violence and rapine by the way. Arrived at Panopeæ, the bulk of the Barbarian army marched through Bœotia, towards Athens, the great object of revenge, while a separate detachment was sent to Delphi, with a view of plundering the prodigious riches accumulated in that celebrated temple, and of which, not perhaps uncharacteristically, Xerxes was said to be better informed than of the treasures he had left behind in his own palace.

But the wise and crafty priesthood of Delphi had been too long accustomed successfully to deceive mankind to lose hope or self-possession at the approach even of so formidable a foe. When the dismayed citizens of Delphi ran to the oracle, demanding advice and wishing to know what should be done with the sacred treasures, the priestess gravely replied, that "the god could take care of his own possessions, and that the only business of the citizens was to provide for themselves;"—a priestly answer, importing that the god considered his possessions, and not the flock, were the treasure. The one was sure to be defended by a divinity, the other might shift for themselves.

The citizens were not slow in adopting the advice; they immediately removed their wives and children into Achaia — while the males and adults fled — some to Amphissa, some amidst the craggy recesses of Parnassus, or into that vast and spacious cavern at the base of Mount Corycus, dedicated to the Muses, and imparting to those lovely deities the poetical epithet of Corycides. Sixty men, with the chief priest, were alone left to protect the sacred city.

VI. But superstition can dispense with numbers in its agency. Just as the Barbarians were in sight of the temple, the sacred arms, hitherto preserved inviolable in the sanctuary, were seen by the soothsayer to advance to the front of the temple. And this prodigy but heralded others more active. As the enemy now advanced in the stillness of the deserted city, and impressed doubtless by their own awe, (for not to a Persian army could there have seemed no veneration due to the Temple of the Sun!) just by the shrine of Minerva Pronæa, built out in front of the great temple, a loud peal of thunder burst suddenly above their heads, and two enormous fragments of rock, (separated from the heights of that Parnassus amidst whose recesses mortals as well as gods lay hid,) rolled down the mountain-side with a mighty crash, and destroyed many of the Persian multitude. At the same time, from the temple of the warlike goddess, broke forth a loud and martial shout, as if to arms. Confused—appalled—panic-stricken, by these supernatural prodigies—the Barbarians turned to fly; while the Delphians, already prepared and armed, rushed from cave and mountain, and charging in the midst of the invaders, scattered them with great slaughter. Those who escaped fled to the army in Bœotia. Thus the treasures of Delphi were miraculously preserved, not only from the plunder of the Persian, but also from the clutch of the Delphian citizens themselves, who had been especially anxious, in the first instance, to be permitted to deposit the treasures in a place of safety. Nobody knew better than the priests that treasures always diminish when transferred from one hand to another.

VII. The Grecian fleet anchored at Salamis by the request of the Athenians, who were the more anxious immediately to deliberate on the state of affairs, as the Persian army was now approaching their borders, and they learnt that the selfish warriors of the Peloponnesus, according to their customary policy, instead of assisting the Athenians, and Greece generally, by marching towards Bœotia, were engaged only in fortifying the Isthmus or providing for their own safety.

Unable to engage the confederates to assist them in protecting Attica, the Athenians entreated, at least, the rest of the maritime allies to remain at Salamis, while they themselves hastened back to Athens.

Returned home, their situation was one which their generous valour had but little merited. Although they had sent to Artemisium the principal defence of the common cause, now, when the storm rolled towards themselves, none appeared on their behalf. They were at once incensed and discouraged by the universal desertion.* How was it possible that alone and unaided they could withstand the Persian multitude? Could they reasonably expect the fortunes of Marathon to be perpetually renewed? To remain at Athens was destruction—to leave it seemed to them a species of impiety. Nor could they anticipate victory with a sanguine hope, in abandoning the monuments of their ancestors and the temples of their gods.†

Themistocles alone was enabled to determine the conduct of his countrymen in this dilemma. Inexhaustible were the resources of a genius which ranged from the most lofty daring to the most intricate craft. Perceiving that the only chance of safety was in the desertion of the city, and that the strongest obstacle to this alternative was in the superstitious attachment to HOME ever so keenly felt by the ancients, he had recourse, in the failure of reason, to a counter-superstition. In the temple of the citadel was a serpent, dedicated to Minerva, and considered the tutelary defender of the place. The food appropriated to the serpent was suddenly found unconsumed —the serpent itself vanished; and, at the suggestion of Themistocles, the priests proclaimed that the goddess had deserted the city and offered herself to conduct them to the seas. Then, amidst the general excitement, Themistocles reiterated his version of the Delphic oracle. Then were the ships reinterpreted to be the wooden walls, and Salamis once more proclaimed "the Divine." The fervour of the people was awakened—the persuasions of Themistocles prevailed — even the women loudly declared their willingness to abandon Athens for the sake of the Athenians; and it was formally decreed that the city should be left to the guardianship of Minerva, and the citizens should save themselves, their women, children, and slaves, as their own discretion might suggest. Most of them took refuge in Trœzene, where they were generously supported at the public expense—some at Ægina—others repaired to Salamis.

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* Plut. in vit. Them.

† Ibid.

A moving and pathetic spectacle was that of the embarkation of the Athenians for the Isle of Salamis. Separated from their children, their wives, (who were sent to remoter places of safety)—abandoning their homes and altars—the citadel of Minerva—the monuments of Marathon,—they set out for a scene of contest, perilous and precarious, and no longer on the site of their beloved and father-land. Their grief was heightened by the necessity of leaving many behind, whose extreme age rendered them yet more venerable, while it incapacitated their removal. Even the dumb animals excited all the fond domestic associations, running to the strand, and expressing by their cries their regret for the hands that fed them : one of them, a dog, that belonged to Xanthippus, father of Pericles, is said to have followed the ships, and swum to Salamis, to die, spent with toil, upon the sands. B.C. 480.

VIII. The fleet now assembled at Salamis ; the Spartans contributed only sixteen vessels, the people of Ægina thirty,—swift galleys and well equipped; the Athenians one hundred and eighty; the whole navy, according to Herodotus, consisted of three hundred and seventy-eight * ships, besides an inconsiderable number of vessels of fifty oars.

Eurybiades still retained the chief command. A council of war was held. The greater number of the more influential allies were composed of Peloponnesians, and, with the countenance of the Spartan chief, it was proposed to retire from Salamis and fix the station in the Isthmus, near the land forces of Peloponnesus. This was highly consonant to the interested policy of the Peloponnesian states, and especially to that of Sparta; Attica was considered already lost, and the fate of that territory they were therefore indisposed to consider. While the debate was yet pending, a messenger arrived from Athens with the intelligence that the Barbarian, having reduced to ashes the allied cities of Thespiæ and Platæa in Bœotia, had entered Attica; and shortly afterwards they learnt that (despite a desperate resistance from the handful of Athenians who, some from poverty, some from a superstitious prejudice in favour of the wooden wall of the citadel, had

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* It is differently stated; by Æschylus and Nepos at three hundred, by Thucydides at four hundred.

long held out, though literally girt by fire from the burning of their barricades,) the citadel had been taken, plundered, and burnt, and the remnant of its defenders put to the sword.

IX. Consternation seized the council; many of the leaders broke away hastily, went on board, hoisted their sails and prepared to fly. Those who remained in the council determined that an engagement at sea could only be risked near the Isthmus. With this resolve the leaders at night returned to their ships.

It is singular how often, in the most memorable events, the fate and the glory of nations is decided by the soul of a single man. When Themistocles had retired to his vessel he was sought by Mnesiphilus, who is said to have exercised an early and deep influence over the mind of Themistocles, and to have been one of those practical yet thoughtful statesmen called into existence by the sober philosophy of Solon,* whose lessons on the science of government made a ground-work for the rhetorical corruptions of the later sophists. On learning the determination of the council, Mnesiphilus forcibly represented its consequences. "If the allies," said he, "once abandon Salamis, you have lost for ever the occasion of fighting for your country.

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* Plut. in vit. Them.

The fleet will certainly separate, the various confederates return home, and Greece will perish. Hasten, therefore, ere yet it be too late, and endeavour to persuade Eurybiades to change his resolution and remain."

This advice, entirely agreeable to the views of Themistocles, excited that chief to new exertions. He repaired at once to Eurybiades; and, by dint of that extraordinary mastery over the minds of others which he possessed, he finally won over the Spartan, and, late as the hour was, persuaded him to re-assemble the different leaders.

X. In that nocturnal council debate grew loud and warm. When Eurybiades had explained his change of opinion and his motives for calling the chiefs together, Themistocles addressed the leaders at some length and with great excitement. It was so evidently the interest of the Corinthians to make the scene of defence in the vicinity of Corinth that we cannot be surprised to find the Corinthian leader, Adimantus, eager to interrupt the Athenian. "Themistocles," said he, "they who at the public games rise before their time are beaten."

"True," replied Themistocles, with admirable gentleness and temper; "but they who are left behind are never crowned."

Pursuing the advantage which a skilful use of interruption always gives to an orator, the Athenian turned to Eurybiades. Artfully suppressing his secret motive in the fear of the dispersion of the allies, which he rightly judged would offend without convincing, he had recourse to more popular arguments. "Fight at the Isthmus," he said, "and you fight in the open sea, where, on account of our heavier vessels and inferior number, you contend with every disadvantage. Grant even success, you will yet lose, by your retreat, Salamis, Megara, and Ægina. You would preserve the Peloponnesus, but remember, that by attracting thither the war, you attract not only the naval but also the land forces of the enemy. Fight here, and we have the inestimable advantage of a narrow sea—we shall preserve Salamis, the refuge of our wives and children—we shall as effectually protect the Peloponnesus as by repairing to the Isthmus and drawing the Barbarian thither. If we obtain the victory, the enemy will neither advance to the Isthmus nor penetrate beyond Attica. Their retreat is sure."

The orator was again interrupted by Adimantus with equal rudeness. And Themistocles, who well knew how to alternate force with moderation, and menace with persuasion, retorted with an equal asperity, but with a singular dignity and happiness of expression.

"It becomes you," said Adimantus, scornfully, alluding to the capture of Athens, "it becomes you to be silent, and not to advise us to desert our country;—you, who no longer have a country to defend! Eurybiades can only be influenced by Themistocles when Themistocles has once more a city to represent."

"Wretch!" replied Themistocles, sternly, "we have indeed left our walls and houses—preferring freedom to those inanimate possessions—but know, that the Athenians still possess a country and a city, greater and more formidable than yours, well provided with stores and men, which none of the Greeks will be able to resist:—our ships are our country and our city."

"If," he added, once more addressing the Spartan chief, "if you continue here you will demand our eternal gratitude:—fly, and you are the destroyers of Greece. In this war the last and sole resource of the Athenians is their fleet:—reject my remonstrances, and I warn you that at once we will take our families on board, and sail to that Siris, on the Italian shores, which of old is said to have belonged to us, and in which, if the oracle be trusted, we ought to found a city. Deprived of us, you will remember my words."

XI. The menace of Themistocles—the fear of so powerful a race, unhoused, exasperated, and in search of a new settlement—and the yet more immediate dread of the desertion of the flower of the navy—finally prevailed. Eurybiades announced his concurrence with the views of Themistocles, and the confederates, wearied with altercation, consented to risk the issue of events at Salamis.

XII. Possessed of Athens, the Persian king held also his council of war. His fleet, sailing up the Euripus, anchored in the Attic bay of Phalerum; his army encamped along the plains around, or within the walls of, Athens. The losses his armament had sustained were already repaired by new reinforcements of Malians, Dorians, Locrians, Bactrians, Carystians, Andrians, Tenedians, and the people of the various Isles. "The farther," says Herodotus, "the Persians penetrated into Greece, the greater the numbers by which they were followed." It may be supposed, however, that the motley contributions of an idle and predatory multitude, or of Greeks compelled not by affection but fear, ill supplied to Xerxes the devoted thousands, many of them his own gallant Persians, who fell at Thermopylæ or perished in the Eubœan seas.

XIII. Mardonius and the leaders generally were for immediate battle. The heroine Artemisia alone gave a more prudent counsel. She represented to them that if they delayed a naval engagement or sailed to the Peloponnesus,* the Greeks, failing of provisions and over-ruled by their fears, would be certain to disperse, to retire to their several homes, and, thus detached, fall an easy prey to his arms.

Although Xerxes, contrary to expectation, received the adverse opinion of the Carian princess, with compliments and praise, he yet adopted the counsel of the majority; and, attributing the ill success at Artemisium to his absence, resolved in person to witness the triumph of his arms at Salamis.

The navy proceeded, in order, to that island: the land forces on the same night advanced to the Peloponnesus: there, under Cleombrotus, brother to Leonidas, all the strength of the Peloponnesian confederates was already assembled. They had fortified the pass of Sciron, another Thermopylæ in its local character, and protected the Isthmus by a wall, at the erection of which the whole army worked night and day;—no materials, sufficing for the object of defence, were disdained—wood, stones, bricks, and sand,—all were pressed into service. Here encamped, they hoped nothing from Salamis, —they believed the last hope of Greece rested solely with themselves.*

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* Here we see additional reason for admiring the sagacity of Themistocles.

XIV. Again new agitation, fear, and dissension, broke out in the Grecian navy. All those who were interested in the safety of the Peloponnesus complained anew of the resolution of Eurybiades —urged the absurdity of remaining at Salamis to contend for a territory already conquered— and the leaders of Ægina, Megara, and Athens, were left in a minority in the council.

Thus overpowered by the Peloponnesian allies, Themistocles is said to have bethought himself of a stratagem, not inconsonant with his scheming and wily character. Retiring privately from the debate, yet unconcluded, and summoning the most confidential messenger in his service,† he despatched him secretly to the enemy's fleet, with this message — "The Athenian leader, really attached to the king, and willing to see the Greeks subjugated to his power, sends me privately to you. Consternation has seized the Grecian navy; they are preparing to fly; lose not the opportunity of a splendid victory. Divided among themselves, the Greeks are unable to resist you; and you will see, as you advance upon them, those who favour, and those who would oppose you, in hostility with each other."

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* Her. lib. viii. c. 74.

† The tutor of his children, Sicinnus, who had experience of the Eastern manners, and spoke the Persian language.

The Persian admiral was sufficiently experienced in the treachery and defection of many of the Greeks, to confide in the message thus delivered to him; but he scarcely required such intelligence to confirm a resolution already formed. At midnight the Barbarians passed over a large detachment to the small isle of Psyttalcia, between Salamis and the continent, and occupying the whole narrow sea as far as the Attic port of Munychia, under cover of the darkness, disposed their ships, so as to surround the Greeks and cut off the possibility of retreat.

XV. Unconscious of the motions of the enemy, disputes still prevailed amongst the chiefs at Salamis, when Themistocles was summoned at night from the council, to which he had returned after dispatching his messenger to the Barbarian. The person who thus summoned him was Aristides. It was the third year of his exile—which sentence was evidently yet unrepealed—or not in that manner, at night, and as a thief, would the eminent and high-born Aristides have joined his countrymen. He came from Ægina in an open boat, under cover of the night passed through the midst of the Persian ships, and arrived at

Salamis to inform the Greeks that they were already surrounded.

"At any time," said Aristides, "it would become us to forget our private dissensions, and at this time especially;—contending only who should most serve his country. In vain now would the Peloponnesians advise retreat; we are encompassed, and retreat is impossible."

Themistocles welcomed the new-comer with joy, and persuaded him to enter the council and acquaint the leaders with what he knew. His intelligence, received with doubt, was presently confirmed by a trireme of Tenians, which deserted to them; and they now seriously contemplated the inevitable resort of battle.

XVI. At dawn all was prepared. Assembled on the strand, Themistocles harangued the troops; and when he had concluded, orders were given to embark.

It was in the autumn of 480 B.C., two thousand three hundred and sixteen years ago, that the battle of Salamis was fought.

High on a throne of precious metals, placed on one of the eminences of Mount Ægaleos, sate, to survey the contest, the royal Xerxes. The rising sun beheld the shores of the Eleusinian Gulf lined with his troops to intercept the fugitives, and with a miscellaneous and motley crowd of such as were rather spectators than sharers of the conflict.*

But not as the Persian leaders had expected was the aspect of the foe; nor did the Greeks betray the confusion or the terror ascribed to them by the emissary of Themistocles. As the daylight made them manifest to the Persian, they set up the loud and martial chorus of the

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* The number of the Persian gallies, at the lowest computation, was a thousand;[1] that of the Greeks, as we have seen, three hundred and eighty. But the Persians were infinitely more numerously manned, having on board of each vessel thirty men-at-arms, in addition to the usual number of two hundred. Plutarch seems to state the whole number in each Athenian vessel at fourteen heavy armed, and four bowmen. But this would make the whole Athenian force only three thousand two hundred and forty men, including the bowmen, who were probably not Athenian citizens. It must therefore be supposed, with Mr. Thirlwall, that the eighteen men thus specified, were *an addition* to the ordinary company.

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[1] Nepos, Herodotus, and Isocrates, compute the total at about twelve hundred; the estimate of one thousand is taken from a dubious and disputed passage in Æschylus, which may be so construed as to signify one thousand, including two hundred and seven vessels, or besides two hundred and seven vessels; viz. twelve hundred and seven in all, which is the precise number given by Herodotus. Ctesias says there were *more* than one thousand.

Pæan—“ the rocks of Salamis echoed back the shout”—and to use the expression of a soldier of that day,* “ the trumpet inflamed them with its clangor.”

As soon as the Greeks began to move, the barbarian vessels advanced swiftly. But Themistocles detained the ardour of the Greeks until the time when a sharp wind usually arose in that sea, occasioning a heavy swell in the channel, which was peculiarly prejudicial to the unwieldy ships of the Persians; but not so to the light, low, and compact vessels of the Greeks. The manner of attack with the ancient navies was to bring the prow of the vessel, which was fortified by long projecting beaks of brass, to bear upon the sides of its antagonist, and this, the swell of the sea causing the Persian gallies to veer about unwieldily, the agile ships of the Greeks were well enabled to effect.

By the time the expected wind arose, the engagement was begun. The Persian admiral† directed his manœuvres chiefly against Themistocles, for on him, as the most experienced and renowned of the Grecian leaders, the eyes of the enemy were turned. From his ship, which was unusually lofty, as from a castle,* he sent forth darts and arrows, until one of the Athenian triremes, commanded by Aminias, shot from the rest, and bore down upon him with the prow. The ships met, and fastened together by their brazen beaks, which served as grappling irons, Ariabignes gallantly boarded the Grecian vessel, and was instantly slain by the hostile pikes, and hurled into the sea.† The first who took a ship was an Athenian, named Lycomedes. The Grecians keeping to the straits, the Persians were unable to bring their whole armament to bear at once, and could only enter the narrow pass by detachments;—the heaviness of the sea, and the cumbrous size of their tall vessels, frequently occasioned more embarrassment to themselves than the foe—driven and hustling the one against the other. The Athenians maintaining the right wing, were opposed by the Phœnicians; the Spartans on the left by the Ionians. The first were gallantly supported by the Æginetans, who, long skilled in maritime warfare, eclipsed even their new rivals the Athenians. The Phœnician line was broken. The Greeks pursued their victory, still preserving the steadiest discipline, and the most perfect order. The sea became strewn and covered with the wrecks of vessels and the bodies of the dead; while, to the left, the Ionians gave way before that part of the allied force commanded by the Spartans, some fighting with great valour, some favouring the Greek confederates. Meanwhile, as the Persians gave way, and the sea became more clear, Aristides, who had hitherto remained on shore, landed a body of Athenians on the isle of Psyttaleia, and put the Persian guard, there stationed, to the sword.

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* Æschylus. Persæ. 397.

† The Persian admiral at Salamis is asserted by Ctesias to have been Onaphas, father-in-law to Xerxes. According to Herodotus, it was Ariabignes, the king's brother, who seems the same as Artabazanes, with whom he had disputed the throne.—Comp. Herod. lib. vii. c. 2, and lib. viii. c. 89.

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* Plut. in vit. Them.

† Plut. in vit. Them. The Ariamenes of Plutarch is the Ariabignes of Herodotus.

Xerxes from the mountain, his countless thousands from the shore, beheld afar and impotent, the confusion, the slaughter, the defeat of the forces on the sea. Anxious now only for retreat, the Barbarians retreated to Phalerum; and there, intercepted by the Æginetans, were pressed by them in the rear; by the Athenians, led by Themistocles, in front. At this time the heroine Artemisia, pursued by that Aminias whose vessel had first grappled with the Persians, and who of all the Athenian captains was that day the most eminently distinguished, found herself in the extremest danger.

BOOK III. CHAP. VII.

Against that remarkable woman, the efforts of the Athenians had been especially directed:—deeming it a disgrace to them to have an enemy in a woman, they had solemnly set a reward of great amount upon her capture. Thus pursued, Artemisia had recourse to a sudden and extraordinary artifice. Falling in with a vessel of the Persians, commanded by a Calyndian prince, with whom she had once been embroiled, she bore down against the ship and sunk it—a truly feminine stratagem—deceiving at once a public enemy, and gratifying a private hatred. The Athenian, seeing the vessel he had pursued thus attack a Barbarian, conceived he had mistaken a friendly vessel, probably a deserter from the Persians, for a foe, and immediately sought new objects of assault. Xerxes beheld and admired the prowess of Artemisia, deeming, in the confusion, that it was a hostile vessel she had sunken.*

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* Mr. Mitford, neglecting to observe this error of Xerxes, especially noted by Herodotus, merely observes—"According to Herodotus, though in this instance we may have difficulty to give him entire credit, Xerxes, from the shore where he sat, saw, admired, and applauded the exploit."—From this passage one would suppose that Xerxes knew it was a friend who had been attacked, and then indeed we could not have credited the account; but if he and those about him supposed it, as Herodotus states, a foe, what is

XVII. The battle lasted till the dusk of evening, when at length the remnant of the Barbarian fleet gained the port of Phalerum ; and the Greeks beheld along the straits of Salamis no other vestige of the enemy, than the wrecks and corpses which were the evidence of his defeat.

XVIII. When morning came, the Greeks awaited a renewal of the engagement ; for the Persian fleet were still numerous, the Persian army yet covered the neighbouring shores, and by a feint to conceal his real purpose, Xerxes had ordered the Phœnician transports to be joined together, as if to connect Salamis to the continent. But a mandate was already issued for the instant departure of the navy for the Hellespont, and a few days afterwards the army itself retired into Bœotia.

The victory of Salamis was celebrated by solemn rejoicings, in which, principally remarkable for the beauty of his person, and his accomplishments on the lyre and in the dance, was a youth named Sophocles, destined afterwards to share the glory of Æschylus, who, no less a warrior than a poet, distinguished himself in the battle, and has bequeathed to us the most

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there incredible? This is one instance in ten thousand more important ones, of Mr. Mitford's habit of arguing upon one sentence, by omitting those that follow and precede it.

detailed and animated account we possess of its events.

The Grecian conquerors beheld the retreat of the enemy with indignation; they were unwilling that any of that armament which had burned their hearths and altars should escape their revenge; they pursued the Persian ships as far as Andros, where, not reaching them, they cast anchor and held a consultation. Themistocles is said to have proposed, but not sincerely, to sail at once to the Hellespont, and destroy the bridge of boats. This council was over-ruled, and it was decided not to reduce so terrible an enemy to despair;—"Rather," said one of the chiefs, (whether Aristides or Eurybiades is differently related,) "build another bridge, that Xerxes may escape the sooner out of Europe."

Themistocles affected to be converted to a policy which he desired only an excuse to effect; and in pursuance of the hint already furnished him, is said to have sent secretly to Xerxes, informing him that it was the intention of the allies to sail to the Hellespont and destroy the bridge, so that if the king consulted his safety he would return immediately into Asia, while Themistocles would find pretexts to delay the pursuit of the confederates.

This artifice appears natural to the scheming character of Themistocles, and, from concurrent testimony,* it seems to me undoubted that Themistocles maintained a secret correspondence with Xerxes, and even persuaded that monarch that he was disposed to favour him. But it is impossible to believe with Herodotus, that he had at that time any real desire to conciliate the Persian, foreseeing that he might hereafter need a refuge at the eastern court. Then in the zenith of his popularity, so acute a foresight is not in man. He was one of those to whom the spirit of intrigue is delight in itself, and in the present instance it was exerted for the common cause of the Athenians, which, with all his faults, he never neglected for, but rather incorporated with, his own.

XIX. Diverted from the notion of pursuing the Persians, the Grecian allies, flushed with conquest, were yet eager for enterprise. The isles which had leagued with the Mede were strongly obnoxious to the confederates, and it was proposed to exact from them a fine, in defrayal of the expenses of the war. Siege was laid to Andros, and those islanders were the first who resisted the demand. Then was it that they made that memorable answer which may serve as a warning in all times to the strong, when pressing on the desperate.

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* Diod. lib. xi. c. 5. Herod. lib. viii. c. 110. Nepos, et Plut. in vit. Them.

"I bring with me," said Themistocles, "two powerful divinities—Persuasion and Force."

"And we," answered the Andrians, "have two gods equally powerful on our side—Poverty and Despair."

The Andrian deities eventually triumphed, and the siege was raised without effect. But from the Parians and Carystians, and some other islanders, Themistocles obtained enormous sums of money unknown to his colleagues, which, however unjustly extorted, it does not satisfactorily appear that he applied largely to his own personal profit, but, as is more probable, to the rebuilding of Athens. Perhaps he thought, nor without reason, that as the Athenians had been the principal sufferers in the war, and contributed the most largely to its resources, so whatever fines were levied on the seceders were due, not to the confederates generally, but the Athenians alone. The previous conduct of the allies, with so much difficulty preserved from deserting Athens, merited no particular generosity, and excused perhaps the retaliation of a selfish policy.

The payment of the fine did not, however, preserve Carystus from attack. After wasting its lands, the Greeks returned to Salamis, and divided the Persian spoils. The first-fruits were dedicated to the Gods, and the choicest of the booty sent to Delphi. And here we may notice one anecdote of Themistocles, which proves, that whatever, at times and in great crises, was the grasping unscrupulousness of his mind, he had at least no petty and vulgar avarice. Seeing a number of bracelets and chains of gold upon the bodies of the dead, he passed them by, and, turning to one of his friends,—" Take these for yourself," said he, " for you are not Themistocles."*

Meanness or avarice was indeed no part of the character of Themistocles, although he has been accused of those vices, because guilty, at times, of extortion. He was profuse, ostentatious, and magnificent above his contemporaries, and beyond his means. His very vices were on a large and splendid scale; and if he had something of the pirate in his nature, he had nothing of the miser. When he had to choose between two suitors for his daughter, he preferred the worthy to the wealthy candidate—willing that she should rather marry a man without money, than money without a man.†

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* Plut. in vit. Them.

† Ibid. These anecdotes have the stamp of authenticity.

XX. The booty divided, the allies repaired to the Isthmus, according to that beautiful ancient custom of apportioning rewards to such as had been most distinguished. It was in the temple of Neptune that the leaders met. The right of voting was confined to the several chiefs, who were to declare whom they thought the first in merit and whom the second. Each leader wrote his own name a candidate for the first rank; but a great majority of suffrages awarded the second to Themistocles. While, therefore, each leader had only a single suffrage in favour of the first rank, the second rank was unequivocally due to the Athenian.

XXI. But even conquest had not sufficed to remove the jealousies of the confederate leaders—they evaded the decision of a question which could not but be propitious to the Athenians, and returned home without having determined the point which had assembled them at the Isthmus. But Themistocles was not of a temper to brook patiently this fraud upon his honours. Far from sharing the petty and miserable envies of their chiefs, the Greeks generally were loud in praise of his wisdom and services; and, taking advantage of their enthusiasm, Themistocles repaired to Sparta, trusting to the generosity of the principal rival to compensate the injustice of many.

His expectations were not ill-founded,—the customs of Sparta allowed no slight to a Spartan, and they adjudged therefore the prize of valour to their own Eurybiades, while they awarded that of wisdom or science to Themistocles. Each was equally honoured with a crown of olive. Forgetful of all their prejudices, their envy, and their inhospitable treatment of strangers, that nation of warriors were dazzled by the hero whose courage assimilated to their own. They presented him with the stateliest chariot to be found in Sparta, and solemnly conducted him homeward as far as Tegea, by an escort of three hundred chosen Spartans called 'The Knights'—the sole example of the Spartans conducting any man from their city. It is said that on his return to Athens, Themistocles was reproached by Timodemus of Aphidna, a Belbinite by origin,* and an implacable public enemy, with his visit to Sparta: "The honours awarded you," said Timodemus, "are bestowed from respect, not to you, but to Athens."

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* Herod. lib. viii. c. 125. See Wesseling's Comment on Timodemus.—Plutarch tells the same anecdote, but makes the baffled rebuker of Themistocles a citizen of Seriphus, an island in which, according to Ælian, the frogs never croaked; the men seem to have made up for the silence of the frogs!

"My friend," retorted the witty chief, "the matter stands thus. Had I been a Belbinite, I had not been thus distinguished at Sparta, nor would you, although you had been born an Athenian!"

While the Greeks were thus occupied, the Persian army had retreated with Mardonius into Thessaly. Here that general selected and marshalled the forces, with which he intended to renew the war, retaining in his service the celebrated Immortals. The total, including the cavalry, Herodotus estimates at three hundred thousand men.

Thus occupied, and ere Xerxes departed from Thessaly, the Spartans, impelled by an oracle, sent a messenger to Xerxes to demand atonement for the death of Leonidas.

"Ay," replied the king, laughing, "this man (pointing to Mardonius) shall make you fitting retribution."

Leaving Mardonius in Thessaly, where he proposed to winter, Xerxes now hastened home. Sixty thousand Persians, under Artabazus, accompanied the king only as far as the passage into Asia; and it was with an inconsiderable force, which, pressed by famine, devastated the very herbage on their way, and which a pestilence and the dysentery diminished as it passed, that the Great King crossed the Hellespont, on which the bridge of boats had already been broken by wind and storm. A more abundant supply of provisions than they had yet experienced, tempted the army to excesses, to which many fell victims. The rest arrived at Sardis with Xerxes, whence he afterwards returned to his more distant capital.

XXII. The people of Potidæa, on the isthmus of Pallene, and Olynthus, inhabited by the Bottiæans, a dubious and mongrel race, that boasted their origin from those Athenians, who in the traditional ages had been sent as tributary captives to the Cretan Minos, no sooner learnt the dispersion of the fleet at Salamis, and the retreat of the king, than they openly revolted from the Barbarian. Artabazus, returning from the Hellespont, laid siege to Olynthus, massacred the inhabitants, and colonized the town with Chalcidians. He then sate down before Potidæa ; but a terrible inundation of the sea, with the sallies of the besieged, destroyed the greater number of the unfortunate invaders. The remnant were conducted by Artabazus into Thessaly, to join the army of Mardonius. The Persian fleet, retreating from Salamis, after passing over the king and his forces from the Chersonese to Abydos, wintered at Cuma; and at the commencement of the spring assembled at Samos.

Meanwhile the Athenians returned to their dismantled city, and directed their attention to its repair and reconstruction. It was then, too, that in all probability, the people hastened, by a formal and solemn reversal of the sentence of ostracism, to reward the services of Aristides, and to restore to the commonwealth the most spotless of its citizens.*

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* See Fast. Hell. vol. ii. page 26.

CHAPTER VIII.

EMBASSY OF ALEXANDER OF MACEDON TO ATHENS—THE RESULT OF HIS PROPOSALS—ATHENIANS RETREAT TO SALAMIS—MARDONIUS OCCUPIES ATHENS—THE ATHENIANS SEND ENVOYS TO SPARTA—PAUSANIAS SUCCEEDS CLEOMBROTUS AS REGENT OF SPARTA—BATTLE OF PLATÆA—THEBES BESIEGED BY THE ATHENIANS—BATTLE OF MYCALË—SIEGE OF SESTOS—CONCLUSION OF THE PERSIAN WAR.

I. THE dawning spring, and the formidable appearance of Mardonius, who with his Persian forces, diminished indeed, but still mighty, lowered on their confines, aroused the Greeks to a sense of their danger. Their army was not as yet assembled, but their fleet, consisting of one hundred and ten vessels, under the command of Leotychides, king of Sparta, and Xanthippus of Athens, lay off Ægina. Thus anchored, there came to the naval commanders certain Chians, who, having been discovered in a plot against the life of Strattis, a tyrant imposed upon Chios by the Persians, fled to Ægina. They declared that all Ionia was ripe for revolt, and their representations induced the Greeks to advance as far as the sacred Delos. Beyond they dared not venture, ignorant alike of the localities of the country and the forces of the enemy. Samos seemed to them no less remote than the pillars of Hercules, and mutual fear thus kept the space between the Persian and the Greek fleet, free from the advance of either. But Mardonius began slowly to stir from his winter lethargy. Influenced, thought the Greeks, perhaps too fondly, by a Theban oracle, the Persian general despatched to Athens no less distinguished an ambassador than Alexander, the king of Macedon. That prince, connected with the Persians by alliance, (for his sister had married the Persian Bubares, son of Megabazus,) was considered an envoy calculated to conciliate the Athenians while he served their enemy. And it was now the object of Mardonius to reconcile the foe whom he had failed to conquer. Aware of the Athenian valour, Mardonius trusted that if he could detach that state from the confederacy, and prevail on the Athenians to unite their arms to his own, the rest of Greece would become an easy conquest. By land he already deemed himself secure of fortune, by sea what Grecian navy, if deprived of the flower of its forces, could resist him?

II. The king of Macedon arrived at Athens;

but conscious of the jealous and anxious fear which the news of an embassy from Persia would excite amongst the confederates, the Athenians delayed to grant him the demanded audience until they had time to send for and obtain deputies from Sparta to be present at the assembly.

Alexander of Macedon then addressed the Athenians.

" Men of Athens !" said he, " Mardonius informs you, through me, of this mandate from the king : ' Whatever injuries,' saith he, ' the Athenians have done me I forgive. Restore them their country—let them even annex to it any other territories they covet — permit them the free enjoyment of their laws. If they will ally with me, rebuild the temples I have burnt.' "

Alexander then proceeded to dilate on the consequences of this favourable mission, to represent the power of the Persian, and urge the necessity of an alliance.—" Let my offers prevail with you," he concluded, " for to you alone, of all the Greeks, the king extends his forgiveness, desiring your alliance."

When Alexander had concluded, the Spartan envoys thus spoke through their chief, addressing, not the Macedonian, but the Athenians :—" We have been deputed by the Spartans to entreat you to adopt no measures prejudicial to Greece, and to receive no conditions from the Barbarians. This, most iniquitous in itself, would be, above all, unworthy and ungraceful in you;—with you rests the origin of the war now appertaining to all Greece. Insufferable, indeed, if the Athenians, once the authors of liberty to many, were now the authors of the servitude of Greece. We commiserate your melancholy condition—your privations for two years of the fruits of your soil, your homes destroyed and your fortunes ruined. We, the Spartans, and the other allies, will receive your women and all who may be helpless in the war, while the war shall last. Let not the Macedonian, smoothing down the messages of Mardonius, move you. This becomes him;—tyrant himself, he would assist in a tyrant's work. But you will not heed him if you are wise; knowing that faith and truth are not in the Barbarians."

III. The answer of the Athenians to both Spartan and Persian, the substance of which is, no doubt, faithfully preserved to us by Herodotus, may rank among the most imperishable records of that high-souled and generous people.

" We are not ignorant," ran the answer, dictated, and probably uttered by Aristides,* " that the power of the Mede is many times greater than our own. We required not that ostentatious admonition. Yet, for the preservation of liberty, we will resist that power as we can. Cease to persuade us to contract alliance with the Barbarian. Bear back to Mardonius this answer from the Athenians—So long as yonder sun," and the orator pointed to the orb,* "holds the courses which now it holds—so long will we abjure all amity with Xerxes—so long, confiding in the aid of our gods and heroes, whose shrines and altars he hath burned, will we struggle against him in battle and for revenge. And thou, beware how again thou bearest such proffers to the Athenians; nor, on the plea of benefit to us, urge us to dishonour; for we would not—ungrateful to thee, our guest and our friend—have any evil befal to thee from the anger of the Athenians.

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* Plut. in vit. Arist.

"For you, Spartans! it may be consonant with human nature that you should fear our alliance with the Barbarians—yet shamefully you fear it, knowing with what spirit we are animated and act. Gold hath no amount—earth hath no territory, how beautiful soever—that can tempt the Athenians to accept conditions from the Mede for the servitude of Greece. Were we so inclined, many and mighty are our prohibitions; first, and chiefly, our temples burnt and overthrown, urging us not to alliance but to revenge. Next, the whole race of Greece has one consanguinity and one tongue, and common are its manners, its altars, and its gods—base indeed, if Athenians were of these the betrayers! Lastly, learn now, if you knew it not before, that, while one Athenian shall survive, Athens allies herself not with Xerxes.

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* Plut. in vit. Arist.

"We thank you for your providence of us—your offers to protect our families—afflicted and impoverished as we are. We will bear, however, our misfortunes as we may—becoming no burthen upon you. Be it your care to send your forces to the field. Let there be no delay. The Barbarian will be on us when he learns that we have rejected his proposals. Before he proceed to Attica let us meet him in Bœotia."

IV. On receiving this answer from the Athenians the Spartan ambassadors returned home; and, shortly afterwards, Mardonius, by rapid marches, conducted his army towards Attica;—fresh supplies of troops recruiting his forces wheresoever he passed. The Thessalian princes, far from repenting their alliance with Mardonius, animated his ardour.

Arrived in Bœotia, the Thebans endeavoured to persuade the Persian general to encamp in that territory, and to hazard no battle, but rather to seek by bribes to the most powerful men in each city, to detach the confederates from the existent alliance. Pride, ambition, and the desire of avenging Xerxes once more upon Athens, deterred Mardonius from yielding to this counsel. He marched on to Attica—he found the territory utterly deserted. He was informed that the inhabitants were either at Salamis or with the fleet. He proceeded to Athens, equally deserted, and ten months after the first capture by Xerxes, that city a second time was occupied by the Mede.

B.C. 479.

From Athens Mardonius despatched a Greek messenger to Salamis, repeating the propositions of Alexander. On hearing these offers in council, the Athenians were animated by a species of fury. A councillor named Lycidas having expressed himself in favour of the terms, he was immediately stoned to death. The Athenian women, roused by a similar passion with the men, inflicted the same fate upon his wife and children—one of those excesses of virtue which become crimes, but for which exigency makes no despicable excuse.* The ambassador returned uninjured.

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* The custom of lapidation was common to the earlier ages; it had a kind of sanction, too, in particular offences; and no crime could be considered by a brave and inflamed people equal to that of advice against their honour and their liberties.

V. The flight of the Athenians to Salamis had not been a willing resort. That gallant people had remained in Attica so long as they could entertain any expectation of assistance from the Peloponnesus; nor was it until compelled by despair at the inertness of their allies, and the appearance of the Persians in Bœotia, that they had removed to Salamis.

The singular and isolated policy of Sparta, which had curbed and crippled, to an exclusive regard for Spartans, all the more generous and daring principles of action, was never, perhaps, so odiously displayed as in the present indifference to an ally that had so nobly preferred the Grecian liberties to its own security. The whole of the Peloponnesus viewed with apathy the occupation of Attica, and the Spartans were employed in completing the fortifications of the Isthmus.

The Athenians despatched messengers to Sparta, as did also Megara and Platæa. These ambassadors assumed a high and reproachful tone of remonstrance.

They represented the conduct of the Athenians in rejecting the overtures of the Barbarians—they upbraided the Spartans with perfidy for breaking the agreement to meet the enemy in Bœotia—they declared the resentment of the Athenians at the violation of this compact, demanded immediate supplies, and indicated the Plains near Thria, a village in Attica, as a fitting field of battle.

The ephors heard the remonstrance, but from day to day delayed an answer. The Spartans, according to Herodotus, were engaged in celebrating the solemnities in honour of Hyacinthus and Apollo; and this ceremonial might have sufficed as a plausible cause for procrastination, according to all the usages and formalities of Spartan manners. But, perhaps, there might be another and a graver reason for the delayed determination of the ephors.

When the Isthmian fortifications were completed, the superstition of the regent Cleombrotus, who had superintended their construction, was alarmed by an eclipse, and he led back to Sparta the detachment he had commanded in that quarter. He returned but to die; and his son Pausanias succeeded to the regency during the continued minority of Pleistarchus, the infant heir of Leonidas.* If the funeral solemnities on the death of a regent were similar to those bestowed upon a deceased king, we can account at once for the delay of the ephors, since the ten days which passed without reply to the ambassadors exactly correspond in number with the ten days dedicated to public mourning.* But whatever the cause of the Spartan delay—and the rigid closeness of that oligarchic government kept, in yet more important matters, its motives and its policy no less a secret to contemporaneous nations than to modern inquirers—the delay itself highly incensed the Athenian envoys: they even threatened to treat with Mardonius, and abandon Sparta to her fate, and at length fixed the day of their departure. The ephors roused themselves. Among the deputies from the various states, there was then in Sparta that Chileus, of Tegea, who had been scarcely less serviceable than Themistocles in managing the affairs of Greece in the Isthmian congress. This able and eminent Arcadian forcibly represented to the ephors the danger of forfeiting the Athenian alliance, and the insufficient resistance against the Persian that the fortifications of the Isthmus would afford. The ephors heard and immediately acted with the secrecy and the vigilance that belongs to oligarchies. That very night they privately despatched a body of five thousand Spartans and thirty-five thousand Helots, (seven to each Spartan,) under the command of Pausanias.

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* See Herod. lib. ix. c. 10. Also Mr. Clinton on the Kings of Sparta. Fast. Hell. vol. ii. p. 187.

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* See Herod. lib. vi. c. 58. After the burial of a Spartan king, ten days were devoted to mourning; nor was any public business transacted in that interval.

The next morning the ephors calmly replied to the angry threats of the Athenians, by protesting that their troops were already on the march, and by this time in Oresteum, a town in Arcadia, about eighteen miles distant from Sparta. The astonished deputies* hastened to overtake the Spartan force, and the ephors, as if fully to atone for their past procrastination, gave them the escort and additional reinforcement of five thousand heavy-armed Laconians or Periœci.

VI. Mardonius soon learnt from the Argives, (who, not content with refusing to join the Greek legion, had held secret communications with the Persians,) of the departure of the Spartan troops. Hitherto, he had refrained from any outrage on the Athenian lands and city, in the hope that Athens might yet make peace with him. He now set fire to Athens, razed the principal part of what yet remained of the walls and temples,† and deeming the soil of Attica ill adapted to his cavalry, and, from the narrowness of its outlets, disadvantageous in case of retreat, after a brief incursion into Megara, he retired towards Thebes, and pitched his tents on the banks of the Asopus, extending from Erythræ to Platæa. Here his force was swelled by such of the Greeks as were friendly to his cause.

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* "According to Aristides' decree," says Plutarch, "the Athenian envoys were Aristides, Xanthippus, Myronides, and Cimon."

† Herodotus speaks of the devastation and ruin as complete. But how many ages did the monuments of Pisistratus survive the ravage of the Persian sword!

VII. Meanwhile the Spartans were joined at the Isthmus by the rest of the Peloponnesian allies. Solemn sacrifices were ordained, and the auguries drawn from the victims being favorable, the Greek army proceeded onward; and, joined at Eleusis by the Athenians, marched to the foot of Cithæron, and encamped opposite the Persians, with the river of the Asopus between the armies. Aristides commanded the Athenians, at the head of eight thousand foot; and while the armies were thus situated, a dangerous conspiracy was detected and defeated by that able general.

The disasters of the war—the devastation of lands, the burning of houses—had reduced the fortunes of many of the Athenian nobles. With their property diminished their influence. Poverty, and discontent, and jealousy of new families rising into repute,* induced these men of fallen fortunes to conspire for the abolition of the popular government at Athens, and, failing that attempt, to betray the cause to the enemy.

This project spread secretly through the camp, and corrupted numbers; the danger became imminent. On the one hand, the conspiracy was not to be neglected; and on the other, in such a crisis, it might be dangerous too narrowly to sift a design in which men of mark and station were concerned. Aristides acted with a singular prudence. He arrested eight of the leaders. Of these he prosecuted only two, (who escaped during the proceedings,) and, dismissing the rest, appealed to the impending battle as the great tribunal which would acquit them of the charge and prove their loyalty to the state.*

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* Plut. in vit. Arist.

VIII. Scarce was this conspiracy quelled than the cavalry of the Persians commenced their operations. At the head of that skilful and gallant horse, for which the Oriental nations are yet renowned, rode their chief, Masistius, clad in complete armour of gold, of brass, and of iron, and noted for the strength of his person and the splendour of his trappings. Placed on the rugged declivities of Cithæron, the Greeks were tolerably safe from the Persian cavalry, save only the Megarians, who, to the number of three thousand, were posted along the plain, and were on all sides charged by that agile and rapid cavalry. Thus pressed, the Megarians sent to Pausanias for assistance. The Spartan beheld the air darkened with shafts and arrows, and knew that his heavy-armed warriors were ill-adapted to act against horse. He in vain endeavoured to arouse those about him, by appeals to their honour—all declined the succour of the Megarians—when Aristides, causing the Athenian to eclipse the Spartan chivalry, undertook the defence. With three hundred infantry, mixed with archers, Olympiodorus, one of the ablest of the Athenian officers, advanced eagerly on the Barbarian.

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* This, among a thousand anecdotes, proves how salutary and inevitable was the popular distrust of the aristocracy. When we read of the process of bribing the principal men, and of the conspiracy entered into by others, we must treat with contempt those accusations of the jealousy of the Grecian people towards their superiors which form the staple declamations of common-place historians.

Masistius himself, at the head of his troop, spurred his Nisæan charger against the new enemy. A sharp and obstinate conflict ensued; when the horse of the Persian general, being wounded, threw its rider, who could not regain his feet from the weight of his armour. There, as he lay on the ground, with a swarm of foes around him, the close scales of his mail protected him from their weapons, until at length a lance pierced the brain through an opening in his vizor. After an obstinate conflict for his corpse, the Persians were beaten back to the camp, where the death of one, second only to

Mardonius in authority and repute, spread universal lamentation and dismay.

The body of Masistius, which, by its vast size and beautiful proportions, excited the admiration of the victors, remained the prize of the Greeks; and, placed on a bier, it was borne triumphantly through the ranks.

IX. After this victory, Pausanias conducted his forces along the base of Cithæron into the neighbourhood of Platæa, which he deemed a more convenient site for the disposition of his army and the supply of water. There, near the Fountain of Gargaphia,* one of the sources of the Asopus, (which splits into many rivulets, bearing a common name,) and renowned in song for the death of the fabulous Actæon, nor far from the shrine of an old Platæan hero, (Androcrates,) the Greeks were marshalled in regular divisions, the different nations, some on a gentle acclivity, others along the plain.

In the allotment of the several stations a dispute arose between the Athenians and the Tegeans. The latter claimed, from ancient and traditionary prescription, the left wing, (the right being unanimously awarded to the Spartans,) and assumed, in the course of their argument, an insolent superiority over the Athenians.

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* Gargaphia is one mile and a half from the town of Platæa.—Gell's Itin. 112.

"We come here to fight," answered the Athenians, (or Aristides in their name,*) "and not to dispute. But since the Tegeans proclaim their ancient as well as their modern deeds, fit is it for us to maintain our precedence over the Arcadians."

Touching slightly on the ancient times referred to by the Tegeans, and quoting their former deeds, the Athenians insisted chiefly upon Marathon; "Yet," said their orators, or orator, in conclusion, "while we maintain our right to the disputed post, it becomes us not, at this crisis, to altercate on the localities of the battle. Place us, O Spartans! wherever seems best to you. No matter what our station; we will uphold our honour and your cause. Command then—we obey."

Hearing this generous answer, the Spartan leaders were unanimous in favour of the Athenians; and they accordingly occupied the left wing.

X. Thus were marshalled that confederate army, presenting the strongest force yet opposed to the Persians, and comprising the whole might and manhood of the free Grecian states;—to the right, ten thousand Lacedæmonians, one half, as we have seen, composed of the Periœci, the other moiety of the pure Spartan race—to each warrior of the latter half were allotted seven armed Helots, to each of the heavy-armed Periœci one serving-man. Their whole force was, therefore, no less than fifty thousand men. Next to the Spartans, (a kind of compromise of their claim,) were the one thousand five hundred Tegeans; beyond these five thousand Corinthians; and to them contiguous, three hundred Potidæans of Pallene, whom the inundation of their seas had saved from the Persian arms. Next in order, Orchomenus ranged its six hundred Arcadians; Sicyon sent three thousand, Epidaurus eight hundred, and Trœzene one thousand, warriors. Neighbouring the last were two hundred Lepreatæ, and, by them, four hundred Myceneans and Tirynthians.* Stationed by the Tirynthians, came, in successive order, a thousand Phliasians, three hundred Hermionians, six hundred Eretrians and Styreans, four hundred Chalcidians, five hundred Ambracians, eight hundred Leucadians and Anactorians, two hundred Paleans of Cephallenia, and five hundred only of the Islanders of Ægina. Three thousand Megarians and six hundred Platæans were ranged contiguous to the Athenians, whose force of eight thousand men, under the command of Aristides, closed the left wing.

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* Plut. in vit. Arist.

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* A strange fall from the ancient splendour of Mycenæ, to furnish only four hundred men, conjointly with Tiryns, to the cause of Greece!

Thus the total of the heavy-armed soldiery was thirty-eight thousand seven hundred. To these were added the light-armed force of thirty-five thousand Helots and thirty-four thousand five hundred attendants on the Laconians and other Greeks; the whole amounting to one hundred and eight thousand two hundred men, beside one thousand eight hundred Thespians, who, perhaps, on account of the destruction of their city by the Persian army, were without the heavy arms of their confederates.

Such was the force—not insufficient in number, but stronger in heart, union, the memory of past victories, and the fear of future chains—that pitched the tent along the banks of the rivulets which confound with the Asopus their waters and their names.

XI. In the interim, Mardonius had marched from his former post, and lay encamped on that part of the Asopus nearest to Platæa. His brave Persians fronted the Lacedæmonians and Tegeans; and, in successive order, ranged the Medes and Bactrians, the Indians and the Sacæ, the Bœotians, Locrians, Malians, Thessalians, Macedonians, and the reluctant aid of a thousand Phocians. But many of the latter tribe about the fastnesses of Parnassus, openly siding with the Greeks, harassed the Barbarian outskirts.

Herodotus calculates the hostile force at three hundred and fifty thousand, fifty thousand of which were composed of Macedonians and Greeks. And, although the historian has omitted to deduct from this total, the loss sustained by Artabazus at Potidæa, it is yet most probable that the Barbarian nearly trebled the Grecian army ;—odds less fearful than the Greeks had already met and vanquished.

XII. The armies thus ranged, sacrifices were offered up on both sides. It happened, by a singular coincidence, that to either army was an Elean augur. The appearance of the entrails forbade both Persian and Greek to cross the Asopus, and ordained each to act on the defensive.

That the Persian chief should have obeyed the dictates of a Grecian soothsayer is sufficiently probable ; partly because a superstitious people rarely despise the superstitions of another faith, principally because a considerable part of the invading army, and that perhaps the bravest and the most skilful, was composed of native

Greeks, whose prejudices it was politic to flatter —perilous to affront.

Eight days were consumed in inactivity, the armies confronting each other without motion; when Mardonius, in order to cut off the new forces which every day resorted to the Grecian camp, despatched a body of cavalry to seize the pass of Cithæron. Falling in with a convoy of five hundred beasts of burthen, carrying provisions from the Peloponnesus, the Barbarians, with an inhumanity sufficient, perhaps, to prove that the detachment was not composed of Persians, properly so speaking, a mild though gallant people—slaughtered both man and beast. The provisions were brought to the Persian camp.

XIII. During the two following days, Mardonius advanced nearer to the Asopus, and his cavalry, (assisted by the Thebans, who were the right arm of the Barbarian army,) in repeated skirmishes, greatly harassed the Greeks with much daring and little injury.

At length, Mardonius, either wearied of this inactivity, or unable to repress the spirit of a superior army, not accustomed to receive the attack, resolved to reject all further compliance with the oracles of this Elean soothsayer, and, on the following morning, to give battle to the Greeks. Acting against one superstition, he sagaciously, however, sought to enlist on his behalf another; and, from the decision of a mortal, he appealed to the ambiguous oracles of the Delphic god, which had ever one interpretation for the enterprise and another for the success.

XIV. " The watches of the night were set," says Herodotus, in his animated and graphic strain—" the night itself was far advanced—an universal and utter stillness prevailed throughout the army, buried in repose—when Alexander, the Macedonian prince, rode secretly from the Persian camp, and, coming to the outposts of the Athenians, whose line was immediately opposed to his own, demanded an audience of their commanders. This obtained, the Macedonian thus addressed them :—' I am come to inform you of a secret you must impart to Pausanias alone. From remote antiquity I am of Grecian lineage. I am solicitous of the safety of Greece. Long since, but for the auguries, would Mardonius have given battle. Regarding these no longer, he will attack you early on the morning. Be prepared. If he change his purpose, remain as you are—he has provisions only for a few days more. Should the event of war prove favourable, you will but deem it fitting to make some effort for the independence of one who exposes himself to so great a peril for the purpose of apprising you of the intentions of the foe. I am Alexander of Macedon.'

"Thus saying, the horseman returned to the Persian camp.

"The Athenian leaders hastened to Pausanias, and informed him of what they had heard."

The Spartan does not appear, according to the strong expressions* of Herodotus, to have received the intelligence with the customary dauntlessness of his race. He feared the Persians, he was unacquainted with their mode of warfare, and he proposed to the Athenians to change posts with the Lacedæmonians; "For you," said he, "have before contended with the Mede, and your experience of their warfare you learned at Marathon. We, on the other hand, have fought against the Bœotians and Thessalians, [opposed to the left wing.] Let us then change our stations."

At first the Athenian officers were displeased at the offer, not from terror, but from pride; and it seemed to them as if they were shifted like Helots from post to post at the Spartan's pleasure.† But Aristides, whose power of persuasion consisted chiefly in appeals, not to the baser but the loftier passions, and who in sway-ing, exalted, his countrymen—represented to them that the right wing, which the Spartan proposed to surrender, was, in effect, the station of command.

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* Her. lib. ix. c. 45.

† Plutarch in vit. Arist.

" And are you," he said, " not pleased with the honour you obtain, nor sensible of the advantage of contending, not against the sons of Greece, but the Barbarian invader?"

These words animated those whom the Athenian addressed; they instantly agreed to exchange posts with the Spartans, and " to fight for the trophies of Marathon and Salamis."*

XV. As, in the dead of night, the Athenians marched to their new station, they exhorted each other to valour, and to the recollection of former victories. But Mardonius, learning from deserters the change of position, moved his Persians opposite the Spartans; and Pausanias again returning to the right, Mardonius pursued a similar manœuvre. Thus the day was consumed without an action. The troops having

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* This account, by Herodotus, of the contrast between the Spartan and the Athenian leaders, which is amply supported elsewhere, is, as I have before hinted, a proof of the little effect upon Spartan emulation, produced by the martyrdom of Leonidas. Undoubtedly the Spartans were more terrified by the slaughter of Thermopylæ than fired by the desire of revenge.

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resumed their former posts, Mardonius sent a herald to the Spartans, chiding them for their cowardice, and proposing that an allotted number of Persians should meet an equal number of Spartans in battle, and whoever conquered should be deemed victors over the whole adverse army.

This challenge drew no reply from the Spartans. And Mardonius, construing the silence into a proof of fear, already anticipated the victory. His cavalry advancing upon the Greeks, distressed them, from afar and in safety, with their shafts and arrows. They succeeded in gaining the Gargaphian fountain, which supplied water to the Grecian army, and choked up the stream. Thus cut off from water, and, at the same time, yet more inconvenienced by the want of provisions, the convoy of which was intercepted by the Persian cavalry, the Grecian chiefs determined to shift the ground, and occupy a space, which being surrounded by rivulets, was termed the Island of Oëroë,* and afforded an ample supply of water. This island was about a mile from their present encampment: thence they proposed to detach half their army to relieve a convoy of provisions encompassed in the mountains.

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* "Here seem to be several islands, formed by a sluggish stream in a flat meadow. (Oëroë?) must have been of that description."—*Gell's Itin.* 109.

About four hours after sunset, the army commenced its march, but when Pausanias gave the word to his Spartans, one officer, named Amompharetus, obstinately refused to stir. He alleged the customs and oaths of Sparta, and declared he would not fly from the Barbarian foe, nor connive at the dishonour of Sparta.

XVI. Pausanias, though incensed at the obstinacy of the officer, was unwilling to leave him and his troop to perish, and while the dispute was still unsettled, the Athenians, suspicious of their ally, "for they knew well it was the custom of Spartans to say one thing and to think another,"* despatched a horseman to Pausanias to learn the cause of the delay.

The messenger found the soldiers in their ranks; the leaders in violent altercation. Pausanias was arguing with Amompharetus, when the last, just as the Athenian approached, took up a huge stone with both hands, and throwing it at the feet of Pausanias, vehemently exclaimed, "With this calculus I give my suffrage against flying from the stranger." Pausanias, in great perplexity, bade the Athenian report the cause of the delay, and implore his

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* Herod. lib. ix. c. 54.

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countrymen to halt a little, that they might act in concert.

At length, towards morning, Pausanias resolved, despite Amompharetus, to commence his march. All his forces proceeded along the steep defiles at the base of Cithæron, from fear of the Persian cavalry;—the more dauntless Athenians along the plain. Amompharetus, after impotent attempts to detain his men, was reluctantly compelled to follow.

Battle of Platæa.—September, B.C. 479.

XVII. Mardonius, beholding the vacant ground before him, no longer bristling with the Grecian ranks, loudly vented his disdain of the cowardice of the fugitives, and instantly led his impatient army over the Asopus in pursuit. As yet the Athenians, who had already passed the plain, were concealed by the hills; and the Tegeans and Lacedæmonians were the sole object of attack.

As the troops of Mardonius advanced, the rest of the Persian armament, deeming the task was now not to fight but to pursue, raised their standards and poured forward tumultuously, without discipline or order.

Pausanias, pressed by the Persian line, and if not of a timorous, at least of an irresolute, temper, lost no time in sending to the Athenians for succour. But when the latter were on their march with the required aid, they were suddenly intercepted by the auxiliary Greeks in the Persian service, and cut off from the rescue of the Spartans.

The Spartans beheld themselves thus left unsupported, with considerable alarm. Yet their force, including the Tegeans and Helots, was fifty-three thousand men. Committing himself to the gods, Pausanias ordained a solemn sacrifice, his whole army awaiting the result, while the shafts of the Persian bowmen poured on them near and fast. But the entrails presented discouraging omens, and the sacrifice was again renewed. Meanwhile the Spartans evinced their characteristic fortitude and discipline—not one man stirring from his ranks until the auguries should assume a more favouring aspect; all harassed, and some wounded, by the Persian arrows, they yet, seeking protection only beneath their broad bucklers, waited with a stern patience the time of their leader and of Heaven. Then fell Callicrates, the stateliest and strongest soldier in the whole army, lamenting, not death, but that his sword was as yet undrawn against the invader.

XVIII. And still sacrifice after sacrifice seemed to forbid the battle, when Pausanias, lifting his eyes, that streamed with tears, to the temple of

Juno, that stood hard by, supplicated the tutelary goddess of Cithæron, that if the fates forbade the Greeks to conquer, they might at least fall like warriors.* And while uttering this prayer, the tokens waited for became suddenly visible in the victims, and the augurs announced the promise of coming victory.

Therewith, the order of battle rang instantly through the army, and, to use the poetical comparison of Plutarch, the Spartan phalanx suddenly stood forth in its strength, like some fierce animal—erecting its bristles and preparing its vengeance for the foe. The ground, broken in many steep and precipitous ridges, and intersected by the Asopus, whose sluggish stream† winds over a broad and rushy bed, was unfavourable to the movements of cavalry, and the Persian foot advanced therefore on the Greeks.

Drawn up in their massive phalanx, the Lacedæmonians presented an almost impenetrable body—sweeping slowly on, compact and serried—while the hot and undisciplined valour of the Persians, more fortunate in the skirmish than the battle, broke itself in a thousand waves upon that moving rock. Pouring on in small numbers at a time, they fell fast round the progress of the Greeks—their armour slight against the strong pikes of Sparta—their courage without skill—their numbers without discipline; still they fought gallantly, even when on the ground seizing the pikes with their naked hands, and with the wonderful agility which still characterises the Oriental swordsmen, springing to their feet, and regaining their arms, when seemingly overcome,—wresting away their enemies' shields, and grappling with them desperately hand to hand.

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* Plut. in vit. Arist.

† Sir W. Gell. Itin. of Greece.

XIX. Foremost of a band of a thousand chosen Persians, conspicuous by his white charger, and still more by his daring valour, rode Mardonius, directing the attack—fiercer wherever his armour blazed. Inspired by his presence, the Persians fought worthily of their warlike fame, and, even in falling, thinned the Spartan ranks. At length the rash but gallant leader of the Asiatic armies, received a mortal wound—his skull was crushed in by a stone from the hand of a Spartan.* His chosen band, the boast of the army, fell fighting round him, but his death was the general signal of defeat and flight. Encumbered by their long robes, and pressed by the relentless conquerors, the Persians fled in disorder towards their camp, which

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* Herod. lib. ix. c. 62.

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was secured by wooden entrenchments, by gates and towers and walls. Here, fortifying themselves as they best might, they contended successfully, and with advantage, against the Lacedæmonians, who were ill-skilled in assault and siege.

Meanwhile, the Athenians obtained the victory on the plains over the Greeks of Mardonius — finding their most resolute enemy in the Thebans—(three hundred of whose principal warriors fell in the field)—and now joined the Spartans at the Persian camp. The Athenians are said to have been better skilled in the art of siege than the Spartans ; yet at that time their experience could scarcely have been greater. The Athenians were at all times, however, of a more impetuous temper ; and the men who had 'run to the charge' at Marathon, were not to be baffled by the desperate remnant of their ancient foe. They scaled the walls—they effected a breach through which the Tegeans were the first to rush—the Greeks poured fast and fierce into the camp. Appalled, dismayed, stupified, by the suddenness and greatness of their loss, the Persians no longer sustained their fame—they dispersed themselves in all directions, falling, as they fled, with a prodigious slaughter, so that out of that mighty armament scarce three thousand effected an escape. We must except, however, the wary and distrustful Artabazus, who, on the first tokens of defeat, had fled with the forty thousand Parthians and Chorasmians he commanded, towards Phocis, in the intention to gain the Hellespont. The Mantineans arrived after the capture of the camp, too late for their share of glory; they endeavoured to atone the loss by the pursuit of Artabazus, which was however ineffectual. The Eleans arrived after the Mantineans. The leaders of both these peoples were afterwards banished.

XX. An Æginetan proposed to Pausanias to inflict on the corpse of Mardonius the same insult which Xerxes had put upon the body of Leonidas.

The Spartan indignantly refused. "After elevating my country to fame," said he, "would you have me depress it to infamy by vengeance on the body of the dead? Leonidas and Thermopylæ are sufficiently avenged by this mighty overthrow of the living."

The body of that brave and ill-fated general, the main author of the war, was removed the next day—by whose piety and to what sepulchre is unknown. The tomb of his doubtful fame is alone eternally visible along the plains of Platæa, BOOK III. CHAP. VIII

and above the grey front of the imperishable Cithæron!

XXI. The victory won, the conquerors were dazzled by the gorgeous plunder which remained—tents and couches decorated with precious metals—cups and vessels and sacks of gold—and the dead, themselves a booty, from the costly ornaments of their chains and bracelets, and cimiters vainly splendid—horses and camels and Persian women, and all the trappings and appliances by which despotism made a luxury of war.

Pausanias forbade the booty to be touched,* and directed the Helots to collect the treasure in one spot. But those dexterous slaves secreted many articles of value, by the purchase of which several of the Æginetans, whose avarice was sharpened by a life of commerce, enriched themselves—obtaining gold at the price of brass.

Piety dedicated to the gods a tenth part of the booty — from which was presented to the shrine of Delphi a golden tripod, resting on a three-headed snake of brass; to the Corinthian Neptune a brazen statue of the deity, seven cubits high; and to the Jupiter of Olympia a statue of ten cubits. Pausanias obtained also a tenth of the produce in each article of plunder—horses and camels, women and gold—a prize which ruined in rewarding him. The rest was divided amongst the soldiers, according to their merit.

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* The Tegeans had already seized the tent of Mardonius, possessing themselves especially of a curious brazen manger, from which the Persian's horse was fed, and afterwards dedicated to the Alean Minerva.

So much however was left unappropriated, in the carelessness of satiety, that, in after times, the battle-field still afforded to the search of the Platæans chests of silver and gold, and other treasures.

XXII. Taking possession of the tent of Mardonius, which had formerly been that of Xerxes, Pausanias directed the oriental slaves, who had escaped the massacre, to prepare a banquet after the fashion of the Persians, and as if served to Mardonius. Beside this gorgeous feast, the Spartan ordered his wonted repast to be prepared; and then, turning to the different chiefs, exclaimed—" See the folly of the Persian, who forsook such splendour to plunder such poverty."

The story has in it something of the sublime. But the austere Spartan was soon corrupted by the very luxuries he affected to disdain. It is often that we despise to-day what we find it difficult to resist to-morrow.

XXIII. The task of reward to the living completed, the Greeks proceeded to that of honour to the dead. In three trenches the Lacedæmonians were interred; one contained those who belonged to a class in Sparta, called the Knights,* of whom two hundred had conducted Themistocles to Tegea, (amongst these was the stubborn Amompharetus;) the second the other Spartans; the third the Helots. The Athenians, Tegeans, Megarians, Phliasians, each, had their single and separate places of sepulture, and, over all, barrows of earth were raised. Subsequently, tribes and states, that had shared indeed the final battle, or the previous skirmishes, but without the glory of a loss of life, erected cenotaphs to imaginary dead in that illustrious burial-field. Amongst those spurious monuments was one dedicated to the Æginetans. Aristodemus, the Spartan who had returned safe from Thermopylæ, fell at Platæa, the most daring of the Greeks on that day, voluntarily redeeming a dishonoured life by a glorious death. But to his manes alone, of the Spartan dead, no honours were decreed.

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* I adopt the reading of Valcknaër, 'τους ιππεας.' The Spartan knights, in number three hundred, had nothing to do with the cavalry, but fought on foot or on horseback, as required. (Dionys. Hal. xi. 13.) They formed the royal body-guard.

XXIV. Plutarch relates that a dangerous dispute ensued between the Spartans and Athenians, as to their relative claim to the Aristeia, or first military honours; the question was decided by awarding them to the Platæans—a state of which none were jealous; from a similar motive ordinary men are usually found possessed of the honours due to the greatest.

More important than the Aristeia, had their spirit been properly maintained, were certain privileges then conferred on Platæa. Thither, in a subsequent assembly of the allies, it was proposed by Aristides, that deputies from the states of Greece should be annually sent to sacrifice to Jupiter the Deliverer, and confer upon the general politics of Greece. There, every fifth year, should be celebrated games in honour of Liberty; while the Platæans themselves, exempted from military service, should be deemed, so long as they fulfilled the task thus imposed upon them, a sacred and inviolable people. Thus Platæa nominally became a second Elis—its battle-field another Altis. Aristides, at the same time, sought to enforce the large and thoughtful policy commenced by Themistocles. He endeavoured to draw the jealous states of Greece into a common and perpetual league, maintained against all invaders by a standing force of one thousand cavalry, one hundred ships, and ten thousand heavy-armed infantry.

XXV. An earnest and deliberate council was now held, in which it was resolved to direct the victorious army against Thebes, and demand the persons of those who had sided with the Mede. Fierce as had been the hostility of that state to the Hellenic liberties, its sin was that of the Oligarchy rather than the People. The most eminent of these traitors to Greece were Timagenidas and Attaginus, and the allies resolved to destroy the city, unless those chiefs were given up to justice.

On the eleventh day from the battle they sate down before Thebes, and on the refusal of the inhabitants to surrender the chiefs so justly obnoxious, laid waste the Theban lands.

Whatever we may think of the conduct of Timagenidas, in espousing the cause of the invaders of Greece, we must give him the praise of a disinterested gallantry which will remind the reader of the siege of Calais by Edward III., and the generosity of Eustace de St. Pierre. He voluntarily proposed to surrender himself to the besiegers.

The offer was accepted : Timagenidas and several others were delivered to Pausanias, removed to Corinth, and there executed—a stern but salutary example. Attaginus saved himself by flight. His children, given up to Pausanias, were immediately dismissed. "Infants," said the Spartan, "could not possibly have conspired against us with the Mede."

While Thebes preserved herself from destruction, Artabazus succeeded in effecting his return to Asia, his troop, greatly reduced by the attacks of the Thracians and the excesses of famine and fatigue.

XXVI. On the same day as that on which the battle of Platæa crushed the land forces of Persia, a no less important victory was gained over their fleet at Mycalë in Ionia.

It will be remembered that Leotychides, the Spartan king, and the Athenian Xanthippus, had conducted the Grecian navy to Delos. There anchored, they received a deputation from Samos, amongst whom was Hegesistratus, the son of Aristagoras. These ambassadors declared that all the Ionians waited only the moment to revolt from the Persian yoke, and that the signal would be found in the first active measures of the Grecian confederates. Leotychides, induced by these representations, received the Samians into the general league, and set sail to Samos. There, drawn up in line of battle, near the temple of Juno, they prepared to hazard an engagement.

But the Persians, on their approach, retreated to the continent, in order to strengthen themselves with their land forces, which, to the amount of sixty thousand, under the command of the Persian Tigranes, Xerxes had stationed at Mycalë for the protection of Ionia.

Arrived at Mycalë they drew their ships to land, fortifying them with strong entrenchments and barricades, and then sanguinely awaited the result.

The Greeks, after a short consultation, resolved upon pursuit. Approaching the enemy's station, they beheld the sea deserted, the ships secured by entrenchments, and long ranks of infantry ranged along the shore. Leotychides, by a herald, exhorted the Ionians in the Persian service to remember their common liberties, and that on the day of battle their watchword would be "Hebe."

The Persians, distrusting these messages, though uttered in a tongue they understood not, and suspecting the Samians, took their arms from the latter; and, desirous of removing the Milesians to a distance, entrusted them with the guard of the paths to the heights of Mycalë. Using these precautions against the desertion of their allies, the Persians prepared for battle.

The Greeks were anxious and fearful not so much for themselves as for their countrymen in Bœotia, opposed to the mighty force of Mardonius. But a report spreading through the camp that a complete victory had been obtained in that territory, (an artifice, most probably, of Leotychides,) animated their courage and heightened their hopes.

Battle of Mycalë, September, B.C. 479.

The Athenians, who, with the troops of Corinth, Sicyon, and Trœzene, formed half the army, advanced by the coast and along the plain—the Lacedæmonians by the more steep and wooded courses; and while the latter were yet on their march, the Athenians were already engaged at the entrenchments.

Inspired not more by enmity than emulation, the Athenians urged each other to desperate feats—that they, and not the Spartans, might have the honours of the day. They poured fiercely on—after an obstinate and equal conflict, drove back the foe to the barricades that girt their ships, stormed the entrenchments, carried the wall, and rushing in with their allies, put the Barbarians to disorderly and rapid flight. The proper Persians, though but few in number, alone stood their ground—and even when Tigranes himself was slain, resolutely fought on until the Lacedæmonians entered the entrenchment, and all who had survived the Athenian, perished by the Spartan, sword.

The disarmed Samians, as soon as the fortunes of the battle became apparent, gave all the assistance they could render to the Greeks; the other Ionians seized the same opportunity to revolt and turn their arms against their allies. In the mountain defiles the Milesians intercepted their own fugitive allies, consigning them to the Grecian sword, and active beyond the rest in their slaughter. So relentless and so faithless are men, compelled to servitude, when the occasion summons them to be free.

XXVII. This battle, in which the Athenians were pre-eminently distinguished, was followed up by the conflagration of the Persian ships and the collection of the plunder. The Greeks then retired to Samos. Here deliberating, it was proposed by the Peloponnesian leaders that Ionia should henceforth, as too dangerous and remote to guard, be abandoned to the Barbarian, and that, in recompence, the Ionians should be put into possession of the maritime coasts of those Grecian states which had sided with the Mede. The Athenians resisted so extreme a proposition, and denied the power of the Peloponnesians to dispose of Athenian colonies. The point was surrendered by the Peloponnesians; the Ionians of the continent were left to make their own terms with the Barbarian, but the inhabitants of the Isles which had assisted against the Mede, were received into the general confederacy, bound by a solemn pledge never to desert it. The fleet then sailed to the Hellespont, with the design to destroy the bridge, which they believed still existent. Finding it, however, already broken, Leotychides and the Peloponnesians returned to Greece. The Athenians resolved to attempt the recovery of the colony of Miltiades in the Chersonese. The Persians collected their whole remaining force at Sestos, the strongest hold in that peninsula —the Athenians laid siege to it, and, after enduring a famine so obstinate that the cordage, or rather straps, of their bedding were consumed for food, the Persians evacuated the town, which the inhabitants then cheerfully surrendered.

Siege of Sestos, begun in the autumn, B.C. 479, concluded in the spring, B.C. 478.

Thus concluding their victories, the Athenians returned to Greece, carrying with them a vast treasure, and, not the least precious relics, the fragments and cables of the Hellespontic bridge, to be suspended in their temples.

XXVIII. Lingering at Sardis, Xerxes beheld the scanty and exhausted remnants of his mighty force, the fugitives of the fatal days of Mycalë and Platæa. The army over which he had wept in the zenith of his power, had fulfilled the prediction of his tears: and the armed might of Media and Egypt, of Lydia and Assyria, was no more!

So concluded the great Persian Invasion—that war the most memorable in the history of mankind, whether from the vastness, or from the failure, of its designs. We now emerge from the poetry that belongs to early Greece, through the mists of which the forms of men assume proportions as gigantic as indistinct. The enchanting Herodotus abandons us, and we do not yet permanently acquire, in the stead of his romantic and wild fidelity, the elaborate and sombre statesmanship of the calm Thucydides. Henceforth we see more of the Beautiful and the Wise, less of the Wonderful and Vast. What the Heroic Age is to Tradition, the Persian Invasion is to History.

END OF BOOK III.

ATHENS:
ITS RISE AND FALL.

BOOK IV.

FROM THE END OF THE PERSIAN INVASION TO THE DEATH OF CIMON.—B.C. 479—B.C. 449.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

REMARKS ON THE EFFECTS OF WAR—STATE OF ATHENS—INTERFERENCE OF SPARTA WITH RESPECT TO THE FORTIFICATIONS OF ATHENS—DEXTEROUS CONDUCT OF THEMISTOCLES—THE NEW HARBOUR OF THE PIRÆUS—PROPOSITION OF THE SPARTANS IN THE AMPHICTYONIC COUNCIL DEFEATED BY THEMISTOCLES—ALLIED FLEET AT CYPRUS AND BYZANTIUM—PAUSANIAS—ALTERATION IN HIS CHARACTER—HIS AMBITIOUS VIEWS AND TREASON—THE REVOLT OF THE IONIANS FROM THE SPARTAN COMMAND—PAUSANIAS RECALLED—DORCIS REPLACES HIM—THE ATHENIANS RISE TO THE HEAD OF THE IONIAN LEAGUE—DELOS MADE THE SENATE AND TREASURY OF THE ALLIES—ABLE AND PRUDENT MANAGEMENT OF ARISTIDES—CIMON SUCCEEDS TO THE COMMAND OF THE FLEET—CHARACTER OF CIMON—EION BESIEGED—SCYROS COLONIZED BY ATTICANS—SUPPOSED DISCOVERY OF THE BONES OF THESEUS—DECLINING POWER OF THEMISTOCLES—DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN THE CONSTITUTION—THEMISTOCLES OSTRACISED—DEATH OF ARISTIDES.

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I. It is to the imperishable honour of the French Philosophers of the last century, that, above all the earlier teachers of mankind, they advocated those profound and permanent interests of the

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human race, which are inseparably connected with a love of PEACE; that they stripped the image of WAR of the delusive glory which it took, in the primitive ages of society, from the passions of savages, and the enthusiasm of poets, and turned our contemplation from the fame of the individual hero, to the wrongs of the butchered millions. But their zeal for that HUMANITY, which those free and bold thinkers were the first to make the vital principle of a philosophical school, led them into partial and hasty views, too indiscriminately embraced by their disciples;—and in condemning the evils, they forgot the advantages, of War. The misfortunes of one generation are often necessary to the prosperity of another. The stream of blood fertilizes the earth over which it flows, and war has been at once the scourge and the civilizer of the world: sometimes it enlightens the invader, sometimes the invaded; and forces into sudden and brilliant action the arts and the virtues that are stimulated by the invention of Necessity,—matured by the energy of Distress. What adversity is to individuals, war often is to nations:—Uncertain in its consequences, it is true that with some it subdues and crushes, but with others it braces and exalts. Nor are the greater and more illustrious elements of character in men, or in states, ever called prominently forth, without something of that bitter and sharp experience which hardens the more robust properties of the mind, which refines the more subtle and sagacious. Even when these—the armed revolutions of the world—are most terrible in their results—destroying the greatness, and the liberties of one people—they serve sooner or later to produce a counteracting rise and progress in the fortunes of another; as the sea here advances, there recedes, swallowing up the fertilities of this shore, to increase the territories of that; and fulfilling, in its awful and appalling agency, that mandate of human destinies, which ordains all things to be changed, and nothing to be destroyed. Without the invasion of Persia, Greece might have left no annals, and the modern world might search in vain for inspirations from the ancient.

II. When the deluge of the Persian arms rolled back to its eastern bed, and the world was once more comparatively at rest, the continent of Greece rose visibly and majestically above the rest of the civilized earth. Afar in the Latian plains, the infant state of Rome was silently and obscurely struggling into strength against the neighbouring and petty states in which the old Etrurian civilisation was rapidly passing to decay. The genius of Gaul and Germany, yet unredeemed from barbarism, lay scarce known, save where colonized by Greeks, in the gloom of its woods and wastes. The pride of Carthage had been broken by a signal defeat in Sicily; and Gelo, the able and astute tyrant of Syracuse, maintained in a Grecian colony, the splendour of the Grecian name.

The ambition of Persia, still the great monarchy of the world, was permanently checked and crippled ; the strength of generations had been wasted, and the immense extent of the empire only served yet more to sustain the general peace, from the exhaustion of its forces. The defeat of Xerxes paralysed the East.

Thus, Greece was left secure, and at liberty to enjoy the tranquillity it had acquired, and to direct to the arts of peace the novel and amazing energies which had been prompted by the dangers, and exalted by the victories, of war.

III. The Athenians, now returned to their city, saw before them the arduous task of rebuilding its ruins, and restoring its wasted lands. The vicissitudes of the war had produced many silent and internal, as well as exterior, changes. Many great fortunes had been broken ; and the ancient spirit of the aristocracy had received no inconsiderable shock in the power of new families; the fame of the base-born and democratic Themistocles—and the victories which a whole people had participated—broke up much of the prescriptive and venerable sanctity attached to ancestral names, and to particular families. This was salutary to the spirit of enterprise in all classes. The ambition of the great was excited to restore, by some active means, their broken fortunes and decaying influence—the energies of the humbler ranks, already aroused by their new importance, were stimulated to maintain and to increase it. It was the very crisis in which a new direction might be given to the habits and the character of a whole people; and to seize all the advantages of that crisis, Fate, in Themistocles, had allotted to Athens a man whose qualities were not only pre-eminently great in themselves, but peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of the time. And, as I have elsewhere remarked, it is indeed the nature and prerogative of free states, to concentrate the popular will into something of the unity of despotism, by producing, one after another, a series of representatives of the wants and exigencies of The Hour—each leading his generation, but only while he sympathizes with its will; —and either baffling or succeeded by his rivals, not in proportion as he excels or he is outshone

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in genius, but as he gives or ceases to give to the widest range of the legislative power, the most concentrated force of the executive; thus uniting the desires of the greatest number, under the administration of the narrowest possible control;—the constitution popular—the government absolute but responsible.

IV. In the great events of the late campaign, we have lost sight of the hero of Salamis.* But the Persian War was no sooner ended than we find Themistocles the most prominent citizen of Athens—a sufficient proof that his popularity had not yet diminished, and that his absence from Platæa was owing to no popular caprice or party triumph.

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* Mr. Mitford attributes his absence from the scene to some jealousy of the honours he received at Sparta, and the vain glory with which he bore them. But the vague observations in the authors he refers to by no means bear out this conjecture, nor does it seem probable that the jealousy was either general or keen enough to effect so severe a loss to the public cause. Menaced with grave and imminent peril, it was not while the Athenians were still in the camp, that they would have conceived all the petty envies of the forum. The jealousies Themistocles excited, were of much later date. It is probable that, at this period, he was entrusted with the very important charge of watching over and keeping together that considerable but scattered part of the Athenian population which was not engaged either at Mycalë or Platæa.

V. In the sweeping revenge of Mardonius, even private houses had been destroyed, excepting those which had served as lodgments for the Persian nobles.* Little of the internal city, less of the outward walls, was spared. As soon as the Barbarians had quitted their territory, the citizens flocked back with their slaves and families from the various places of refuge; and the first care was to rebuild the city. They were already employed upon this necessary task, when ambassadors arrived from Sparta, whose vigilant government, ever jealous of a rival, beheld with no unreasonable alarm the increasing navy, and the growing fame, of a people hitherto undeniably inferior to the power of Lacedæmon. And the fear that was secretly cherished by that imperious nation, was yet more anxiously nursed by the subordinate allies.† Actuated by their own and the general apprehensions, the Spartans therefore now requested the Athenians to desist from the erection of their walls. Nor was it without a certain grace, and a plausible excuse, that the government of a city, itself unwalled, inveighed against the policy of walls for Athens. The Spartan ambassadors urged that fortified towns would become strongholds to the Barbarian, should he again invade them; and the walls of Athens might be no less useful to him than he had found the ramparts of Thebes. The Peloponnesus, they asserted, was the legitimate retreat and the certain resource of all; and, unwilling to appear exclusively jealous of Athens, they requested the Athenians not only to desist from their own fortifications, but to join with them in razing every fortification without the limit of the Peloponnesus.

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* Thucyd. lib. i. c. 89.

† Ibid. lib. i. c. 90.

It required not a genius so penetrating as that of Themistocles, to divine at once the motive of the demand, and the danger of a peremptory refusal. He persuaded the Athenians to reply, that they would send ambassadors to debate the affair; and dismissed the Spartans without further explanation. Themistocles next recommended to the senate* that he himself might be one of the ambassadors sent to Sparta, and that those associated with him in the mission (for it was not the custom of Greece to vest embassies in individuals) should be detained at Athens until the walls were carried to a height sufficient, at least, for ordinary defence. He urged his countrymen to suspend, for this great task, the completion of all private edifices—nay, to spare no building, private or public, from which materials might be adequately selected. The whole population, slaves, women, and children, were to assist in the labour.

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* Diod. Sic. lib. xi.; Thucyd. lib. i. c. 90.

VI. This counsel adopted, he sketched an outline of the conduct he himself intended to pursue, and departed for Sparta. His colleagues, no less important than Aristides, and Abronychus, a distinguished officer in the late war, were to follow at the time agreed on.

Arrived in the Laconian capital, Themistocles demanded no public audience, avoided all occasions of opening the questions in dispute, and screened the policy of delay beneath the excuse that his colleagues were not yet arrived—that he was incompetent to treat without their counsel and concurrence—and that doubtless they would speedily appear in Sparta.

When we consider the shortness of the distance between the states, the communications the Spartans would receive from the neighbouring Æginetans, more jealous than themselves, and the astute and proverbial sagacity of the Spartan council—it is impossible to believe, that for so long a period as, with the greatest expedition, must have elapsed from the departure of Themistocles to the necessary progress in the fortifications, the Ephors could have been ignorant of the preparations at Athens, or the designs of Themistocles. I fear, therefore, that we must believe, with Theopompus,* that Themistocles, the most expert briber of his time, heightened that esteem which Thucydides assures us the Spartans bore him, by private and pecuniary negotiations with the Ephors. At length, however, such decided and unequivocal intelligence of the progress of the walls arrived at Sparta, that the Ephors could no longer feel or affect incredulity.

Themistocles met the remonstrances of the Spartans by an appearance of candour, mingled with disdain. "Why," said he, "give credit to these idle rumours? send to Athens some messengers of your own, in whom you can confide; let them inspect matters with their own eyes, and report to you accordingly."

The Ephors (not unreluctantly, if the assertion of Theopompus may be credited) yielded to so plausible a suggestion, and in the meanwhile the crafty Athenian despatched a secret messenger to Athens, urging the Government to detain the Spartan ambassadors with as little semblance of design as possible, and by no means to allow their departure, until the safe return of their own mission to Sparta. For it was by no means improbable, that without such hostages, even the Ephors, however powerful and however influenced, might not be enabled, when the Spartans generally were made acquainted with the deceit practised upon them, to prevent the arrest of the Athenian delegates.*

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* Ap. Plut. in vit. Them.

At length, the walls, continued night and day with incredible zeal and toil, were sufficiently completed; and disguise, no longer possible, was no longer useful. Themistocles demanded the audience he had hitherto deferred, and boldly avowed that Athens was now so far fortified as to protect its citizens. "In future," he added, haughtily, "when Sparta or our other confederates send ambassadors to Athens, let them address us as a people well versed in our own interests, and the interests of our common Greece. When we deserted Athens for our ships, we required and obtained no Lacedæmonian succours to support our native valour; in all subsequent measures, to whom have we shown ourselves inferior, whether in the council or the field? At present we have judged it expedient to fortify our city, rendering it thus more secure for ourselves and our allies. Nor would it be possible, with a strength inferior to that of any rival power, adequately to preserve and equally to adjust the balance of the liberties of Greece."*

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* Diodorus (lib. xi.) tells us that the Spartan ambassadors, indulging in threatening and violent language at perceiving the walls so far advanced, were arrested by the Athenians, who declared they would only release them on receiving back safe and uninjured their own ambassadors.

Contending for this equality, he argued that either all the cities in the Lacedæmonian league should be dismantled of their fortresses, or that it should be conceded, that in erecting fortresses for herself, Athens had rightly acted.

VII. The profound and passionless policy of Sparta forbade all outward signs of unavailing and unreasonable resentment. The Spartans therefore replied, with seeming courtesy, that "in their embassy they had not sought to dictate, but to advise—that their object was the common good;" and they accompanied their excuses with professions of friendship for Athens, and panegyrics on the Athenian valour in the recent war. But the anger they forbore to show only rankled the more bitterly within.†

The ambassadors of either state returned home; and thus the mingled firmness and craft of Themistocles, so well suited to the people with whom he had to deal, preserved his country from the present jealousies of a yet more deadly and implacable foe than the Persian king, and laid the foundation of that claim of equality with the most eminent state of Greece, which he hastened to strengthen and enlarge.

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* Thucyd. lib. i. c. 91.

† Ibid. lib. i. c. 92.

The ardour of the Athenians in their work of fortification, had spared no material which had the recommendation of strength. The walls everywhere presented, and long continued to exhibit, an evidence of the haste in which they were built. Motley and rough hewn, and uncouthly piled, they recalled, age after age, to the traveller, the name of the ablest statesman, and the most heroic days, of Athens. There, at frequent intervals, would he survey stones wrought in the rude fashion of former times,—ornaments borrowed from the antique edifices demolished by the Mede,—and frieze and column plucked from dismantled sepulchres;—so that even the dead contributed from their tombs to the defence of Athens.

VIII. Encouraged by the new popularity and honours which followed the success of his mission, Themistocles now began to consummate the vast schemes he had formed, not only for the aggrandisement of his country, but for the change in the manners of the citizens. All that is left to us of this wonderful man proves that, if excelled by others in austere virtue, or in dazzling accomplishment, he stands unrivalled for the profound and far-sighted nature of his policy. He seems, unlike most of his brilliant countrymen, to have been little influenced by the sallies of impulse, or the miserable expediencies of faction—his schemes denote a mind acting on gigantic systems; and it is astonishing with what virtuous motives and with what prophetic art he worked through petty and (individually considered) dishonest means to grand and permanent results. He stands out to the gaze of time, the model of what a great and fortunate statesman should be, so long as mankind have evil passions, as well as lofty virtues, and the state that he seeks to serve is surrounded by powerful and restless foes, whom it is necessary to overreach where it is dangerous to offend.

In the year previous to the Persian war, Themistocles had filled the office of Archon;* and had already in that year planned the construction of a harbour in the ancient deme of Piræus,* for the convenience of the fleet which Athens had formed. Late events had frustrated the continuance of the labour, and Themistocles now resolved to renew and complete it, probably on a larger and more elaborate scale.

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* Schol. ad Thucyd. lib. i. c. 93. See Clinton. Fasti Hell. vol. ii. Introduction, pp. 13 and 14. Mr. Thirlwall, vol. ii. p. 401, disputes the date for the archonship of Themistocles given by Mr. Clinton and confirmed by the scholiast on Thucydides. He adopts (page 366) the date which M. Boeckh founds upon Philochorus, viz. B. C. 493. But the Themistocles who was archon in that year is evidently another person from the Themistocles of Salamis; for in 493 that hero was about twenty-one, an age at which the bastard of Neocles might be driving courtezans in a chariot, (as is recorded in Athenæus,) but was certainly not archon of Athens. As for M. Boeckh's proposed emen-

The port of Phalerum had hitherto been the main harbour of Athens—one wholly inadequate to the new navy she had acquired; ano-

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dation, quoted so respectfully by Mr. Thirlwall, by which we are to read ‘Υβριλίδου for Κέβριδος, it is an assumption so purely fanciful as to require no argument for refusing it belief. Mr. Clinton's date for the archonship of the great Themistocles is the one most supported by internal evidence—1st, by the blanks of the years 481-482 in the list of archons; 2ndly, by the age, the position, and repute, of Themistocles in B. C. 481, two years after the ostracism of his rival Aristides. If it were reduced to a mere contest of probabilities between Mr. Clinton on one side and Mr. Boeckh and Mr. Thirlwall on the other, which is the more likely, that Themistocles should have been chief archon of Athens at twenty-one or at thirty-three—before the battle of Marathon or after his triumph over Aristides? In fact, a schoolboy knows that at twenty-one (and Themistocles was certainly not older in 493) no Athenian could have been archon. In all probability Κέβριδος is the right reading, in Philochorus, and furnishes us with the name of the archon in B. C. 487 or 486, which years have hitherto been chronological blanks, so far as the Athenian archons are concerned.

* Pausan. lib. i. c. 1.

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ther inlet, Munychia, was yet more inconvenient. But, equally at hand, was the capacious, though neglected port of Piræus, so formed by nature as to permit of a perfect fortification against a hostile fleet. Of Piræus, therefore, Themistocles now designed to construct the most ample and the most advantageous harbour throughout all Greece. He looked upon this task as the foundation of his favourite and most ambitious project; viz. the securing to Athens the sovereignty of the sea.*

The completion of the port – the increased navy, which the construction of the new harbour would induce—the fame already acquired by Athens in maritime warfare, encouraging attention to naval discipline and tactics—proffered a splendid opening to the ambition of a people at once enterprising and commercial. Themistocles hoped that the results of his policy would enable the Athenians to gain over their own offspring, the Ionian colonies, and by their means to deliver from the Persian yoke, and permanently attach to the Athenian interest, all the Asiatic Greeks. Extending his views, he beheld the various insular states united to Athens by a vast maritime power, severing themselves from Lacedæmon, and following the lead of the Attican Republic. He saw his native city thus supplanting, by a naval

* Diod. lib. xi.

force, the long-won pre-eminence and iron supremacy of Sparta upon land, and so extending her own empire, while she sapped secretly and judiciously the authority of the most formidable of her rivals.

IX. But in the execution of these grand designs Themistocles could not but anticipate considerable difficulties: first, in the jealousy of the Spartans, and secondly, in the popular and long-rooted prejudices of the Athenians themselves. Hitherto they had discouraged maritime affairs, and their more popular leaders had directed attention to agricultural pursuits. We may suppose, too, that the Mountaineers, or agricultural party, not the least powerful, would resist so great advantages to the faction of the Coastmen, if acquainted with all the results which the new policy would produce. Nor could so experienced a leader of mankind be insensible of those often not insalutary consequences of a free state in the changing humours of a wide democracy—their impatience at pecuniary demands—their quick and sometimes uncharitable apprehensions of the motives of their advisers. On all accounts it was necessary, therefore, to act with as much caution as the task would admit—rendering the design invidious neither to foreign, nor to domestic, jealousies. Themistocles seems to have steered his course

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through every difficulty with his usual address. Stripping the account of Diodorus * of its improbable details, it appears credible at least that Themistocles secured, in the first instance, the co-operation of Xanthippus and Aristides, the heads of the great parties generally opposed to his measures, and that he won the democracy to consent that the outline of his schemes should not be submitted to the popular assembly, but to the Council of Five Hundred. It is perfectly clear, however, that, as soon as the plan was carried into active operation, the Athenians could not, as Diodorus would lead us to suppose, have been kept in ignorance of its nature; and all of the tale of Diodorus to which we can lend our belief is, that the people permitted the Five Hundred to examine the project, and that the popular assembly ratified the approbation of that senate without inquiring the reasons upon which it was founded.

X. The next care of Themistocles was to anticipate the jealousy of Sparta, and forestal her interference. According to Diodorus, he despatched, therefore, ambassadors to Lacedæmon, representing the advantages of forming a port which might be the common shelter of Greece, should the Barbarian renew his incursions; but it is so obvious that Themistocles could hardly

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* Diod. lib. xi.

disclose to Sparta the very project he at first concealed from the Athenians, that while we may allow the fact that Themistocles treated with the Spartans, we must give him credit, at least, for more crafty diplomacy than that ascribed to him by Diodorus. But whatever the pretexts with which he sought to amuse or beguile the Spartan government, they appear at least to have been successful. And the customary indifference of the Spartans towards maritime affairs was strengthened at this peculiar time by engrossing anxieties as to the conduct of Pausanias. Thus Themistocles, safe alike from foreign and from civil obstacles, pursued with activity the execution of his schemes. The Piræus was fortified by walls of amazing thickness, so as to admit two carts abreast. Within, the entire structure was composed of solid masonry, hewn

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* Diod. lib. xi. The reader will perceive that I do not agree with Mr. Thirlwall and some other scholars, for whose general opinion I have the highest respect, in rejecting altogether, and with contempt, the account of Diodorus, as to the precautions of Themistocles. It seems to me highly probable that the main features of the story are presented to us faithfully; 1st, that it was not deemed expedient to detail to the popular assembly all the objects and motives of the proposed construction of the new port; and, 2ndly, that Themistocles did not neglect to send ambassadors to Sparta, though certainly not with the intention of dealing more frankly with the Spartans than he had done with the Athenians.

square, so that each stone fitted exactly, and was farther strengthened on the outside by cramps of iron. The walls were never carried above half the height originally proposed. But the whole was so arranged as to form a fortress against assault, too fondly deemed impregnable, and to be adequately manned by the smallest possible number of citizens; so that the main force might, in time of danger, be spared to the fleet.

Thus Themistocles created a sea-fortress more important than the city itself, conformably to the advice he frequently gave to the Athenians, that if hard pressed by land, they should retire to this arsenal, and rely, against all hostilities, on their naval force.*

The new port, which soon bore the ambitious title of the Lower City, was placed under the directions of Hippodamus, a Milesian, who, according to Aristotle, † was the first author who, without any knowledge of practical affairs, wrote upon the theory of government. Temples,‡ a market-place, even a theatre, distinguished and enriched the new town. And the population that filled it were not long before they contracted and established a character for themselves different in many traits and attributes from the citizens of the ancient Athens—more bold, wayward, innovating, and tumultuous.

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* Thucyd. lib. i.

† Aristot. Pol. lib. ii. Aristotle deems the speculations of the philosophical architect worthy of a severe and searching criticism.

‡ Of all the temples, those of Minerva and Jupiter were the most remarkable, in the time of Pausanias. There were then *two* market-places. See Pausanias, lib. i. c. 1.

But if Sparta deemed it prudent, at present, to avoid a direct assumption of influence over Athens, her scheming councils were no less bent, though by indirect and plausible means, to the extension of her own power. To use the simile applied to one of her own chiefs, where the lion's skin fell short, she sought to eke it by the fox's.

At the assembly of the Amphictyons, the Lacedæmonian delegates moved that all those states who had not joined in the Anti-Persic confederacy should be expelled the council. Under this popular and patriotic proposition was sagaciously concealed the increase of the Spartan authority; for had the Thessalians, Argives, and Thebans, (voices ever counter to the Lacedæmonians,) been expelled the assembly, the Lacedæmonian party would have secured the preponderance of votes, and the absolute dictation of that ancient council.*

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* Yet at this time the Amphictyonic Council was so feeble, that had the Spartans succeeded they would have made but

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But Themistocles, who seemed endowed with a Spartan sagacity for the foiling the Spartan interests, resisted the proposition by arguments no less popular. He represented to the delegates that it was unjust to punish states for the errors of their leaders—that only thirty-one cities had contributed to the burden of the war, and many of those inconsiderable—that it was equally dangerous and absurd to exclude from the general Grecian councils the great proportion of the Grecian states.

The arguments of Themistocles prevailed, but his success stimulated yet more sharply against him the rancour of the Lacedæmonians; and, unable to resist him abroad, they thenceforth resolved to undermine his authority at home.

XI. While, his danger invisible, Themistocles was increasing with his own power that of the state, the allies were bent on new enterprises and continued retribution. From Persia, now humbled and exhausted, it was the moment to wrest the Grecian towns, whether in Europe or in Asia, over which she yet arrogated dominion—it was resolved, therefore, to fit out a fleet, to which the Peloponnesus contributed

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a hollow acquisition of authority; unless, indeed, with the project of gaining a majority of votes, they united another for reforming or reinvigorating the institution.

twenty and Athens thirty vessels. Aristides presided over the latter; Pausanias was commander-in-chief; many other of the allies joined the expedition. They sailed to Cyprus, and reduced with ease most of the towns in that island. Thence proceeding to Byzantium, the main strength and citadel of Persia upon those coasts, and the link between her European and Asiatic dominions, they blockaded the town and ultimately carried it.

But these foreign events, however important in themselves, were trifling in comparison with a revolution which accompanied them, and which, in suddenly raising Athens to the supreme command of allied Greece, may be regarded at once as the author of the coming greatness—and the subsequent reverses—of that republic.

XII. The habits of Sparta—austere, stern, unsocial—rendered her ever more effectual in awing foes than conciliating allies; and the manners of the soldiery were at this time not in any way redeemed or counterbalanced by those of the chief. Since the battle of Platæa a remarkable change was apparent in Pausanias. Glory had made him arrogant, and sudden luxury ostentatious. He had graven on the golden tripod, dedicated by the confederates to the Delphic god, an inscription, claiming exclusively to himself, as the general of the Grecian army, the conquest of the Barbarians—an egotism no less at variance with the sober pride of Sparta, than it was offensive to the just vanity of the allies. The inscription was afterwards erased by the Spartan government, and another, citing only the names of the confederate cities, and silent as to that of Pausanias, was substituted in its place.

XIII. To a man of this arrogance, and of a grasping and already successful ambition, circumstances now presented great and irresistible temptation. Though leader of the Grecian armies, he was but the uncle and proxy of the young Spartan king—the time must come when his authority would cease, and the conqueror of the superb Mardonius sink into the narrow and severe confines of a Spartan citizen. Possessed of great talents and many eminent qualities, they but served the more to discontent him with the limits of their legitimate sphere and the sterility of the Spartan life. And this discontent, operating on a temper naturally haughty, evinced itself in a manner rude, overbearing, and imperious, which the spirit of his confederates was ill calculated to suffer or forgive.

But we can scarcely agree with the ancient historians in attributing the ascendency of the Athenians alone, or even chiefly, to the conduct of Pausanias. The present expedition was naval, and the greater part of the confederates at Byzantium were maritime powers. The superior fleet, and the recent naval glories, of the Athenians, could not fail to give them, at this juncture, a moral pre-eminence over the other allies; and we shall observe, that the Ionians, and those who had lately recovered their freedom from the Persian yoke,* were especially desirous to exchange the Spartan for the Athenian command. Connected with the Athenians by origin—by maritime habits—by a kindred suavity and grace of temperament—by the constant zeal of the Athenians for their liberties (which made indeed the first cause of the Persian war)—it was natural that the Ionian Greeks should prefer the standard of Athens to that of a Doric state; and the proposition of the Spartans, (baffled by Athenian councils,) to yield up the Ionic settlements to the Barbarians, could not but bequeath a lasting resentment to those proud and polished colonies.

XIV. Aware of the offence he had given, and disgusted, himself, alike with his allies and his country, the Spartan chief became driven by nature and necessity to a dramatic situation, which a future Schiller may perhaps render yet more interesting than the treason of the gorgeous Wallenstein, to whose character that of Pausanias has been indirectly likened.* The capture of Byzantium brought the Spartan Regent into contact with many captured and noble Persians,† amongst whom were some related to Xerxes himself. With these conversing, new and dazzling views were opened to his ambition. He could not but recal the example of Demaratus, whose exile from the barren dignities of Sparta had procured him the luxuries and the splendour of oriental pomp, with the delegated authority of three of the fairest cities of Æolia. Greater in renown than Demaratus, he was necessarily more aspiring in his views. Accordingly he privately released his more exalted prisoners, pretending they had escaped, and finally explained whatever messages he had entrusted by them to Xerxes, in a letter to the king, confided to an Eretrian, named Gongylus, who was versed in the language and the manners of Persia, and to whom he had already deputed the government of Byzantium. In this letter, Pausanias offered to assist the king in reducing Sparta and the rest of Greece to the Persian yoke, demanding, in recompense, the hand of the king's daughter, with an adequate dowry of possessions and of power.

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* Thucyd. lib. i. c. 96.

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* Heeren. Pol. Hist. of Greece.

† Corn. Nep. in vit. Paus.

XV. The time had passed when a Persian monarch could deride the loftiness of a Spartan's pretensions—Xerxes received the communications with delight, and despatched Artabazus to succeed Megabates in Phrygia, and to concert with the Spartan upon the means whereby to execute their joint design.* But while Pausanias was in the full flush of his dazzled and grasping hopes, his fall was at hand. Occupied with his new projects, his natural haughtiness increased daily. He never accosted the officers of the allies but with abrupt and overbearing insolence; he insulted the military pride by sentencing many of the soldiers to corporeal chastisement, or to stand all day with an iron anchor on their shoulders.† He permitted none to seek water, forage, or litter, until the Spartans were first supplied—those who attempted it were driven away by rods. Even Aristides, seeking to remonstrate, was repulsed rudely.—"I am not at leisure," said the Spartan, with a frown.‡

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* Thucyd. lib. i. c. 129.

† Plut. in vit. Arist.

‡ Plut. in vit. Arist.

Complaints of this treatment were despatched to Sparta, and in the meanwhile the confederates, especially the officers of Chios, Samos, and Lesbos, pressed Aristides to take on himself the general command, and protect them from the Spartan's insolence. The Athenian artfully replied, that he saw the necessity of the proposition, but that it ought first to be authorized by some action which would render it impossible to recede from the new arrangement once formed.

The hint was fiercely taken; and a Samian and a Chian officer, resolving to push matters to the extreme, openly and boldly attacked the galley of Pausanias himself at the head of the fleet. Disregarding his angry menaces, now impotent, this assault was immediately followed up by a public transfer of allegiance; and the aggressors, quitting the Spartan, arrayed themselves under the Athenian, banners. Whatever might have been the consequences of this insurrection were prevented by the sudden recal of Pausanias. The accusations against him had met a ready hearing in Sparta, and that watchful government had already received intimation of his intrigues with the Mede. On his arrival in Sparta, Pausanias was immediately summoned to trial, convicted in a fine for individual and private misdemeanors, but acquitted of the principal charge of treason with the Persians—not so much from the deficiency as from the abundance of proof;* and it was probably prudent to avoid, if possible, the scandal which the conviction of the general might bring upon the nation.

The Spartans sent Dorcis, with some colleagues, to replace Pausanias in the command; but the allies were already too disgusted with the yoke of that nation to concede it. And the Athenian ascendency was hourly confirmed by the talents, the bearing, and the affable and gracious manners of Aristides. With him was joined an associate of high hereditary name and strong natural abilities, whose character it will shortly become necessary to place in detail before the reader. This co-mate was no less a person than Cimon, the son of the great Miltiades.

XVI. Dorcis, finding his pretensions successfully rebutted, returned home; and the Spartans, never prone to foreign enterprise, anxious for excuses to free themselves from prosecuting further the Persian war, and fearful that renewed contentions might only render yet more unpopular the Spartan name, sent forth no fresh claimants to the command; they affected to yield that honour,

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* Thucyd. lib. i.

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with cheerful content, to the Athenians. Thus was effected, without a blow, and with the concurrence of her most dreaded rival, that eventful revolution, which suddenly raised Athens, so secondary a state before the Persian war, to the supremacy over Greece. So much, when nations have an equal glory, can the one be brought to surpass the other, by the superior wisdom of individuals. The victory of Platæa was won principally by Sparta, then at the head of Greece. And the general who subdued the Persians surrendered the results of his victory to the very ally from whom the sagacious jealousy of his countrymen had sought most carefully to exclude even the precautions of defence!

B.C. 477.

XVII. Aristides, now invested with the command of all the allies, save those of the Peloponnesus who had returned home, strengthened the Athenian power by every semblance of moderation.

Hitherto, the Grecian confederates had sent their deputies to the Peloponnesus. Aristides, instead of naming Athens, which might have excited new jealousies, proposed the sacred Isle of Delos, a spot peculiarly appropriate, since it once had been the navel of the Ionian commerce, as the place of convocation and the common treasury:—the temple was to be the senate house. A new distribution of the taxes levied on each state, for the maintenance of the league, was ordained. The objects of the league, were both defensive and offensive; first, to guard the Ægæan coasts and the Grecian Isles, and secondly, to undertake measures for the further weakening of the Persian power. Aristides was elected arbitrator in the relative proportions of the general taxation. In this office, which placed the treasures of Greece at his disposal, he acted with so disinterested a virtue, that he did not even incur the suspicion of having enriched himself, and with so rare a fortune that he contented all the allies. The total, raised annually, and with the strictest impartiality, was four hundred and sixty talents, (computed at about one hundred and fifteen thousand pounds.)

Greece resounded with the praises of Aristides; it was afterwards equally loud in reprobation of the avarice of the Athenians. For with the appointment of Aristides commenced the institution of officers styled Hellenotamiæ, or treasurers of Greece; they became a permanent magistracy—they were under the control of the Athenians; and thus that people were made at once the generals, and the treasurers, of Greece. But the Athenians, unconscious as yet of the power they had attained—their allies yet more blind—it seemed now, that the more the latter should confide, the more the former should forbear. So do the most important results arise from causes uncontemplated by the providence of statesmen, and hence do we learn a truth which should never be forgotten—that that power is ever the most certain of endurance and extent, the commencement of which is made popular by moderation.

XVIII. Thus, upon the decay of the Isthmian Congress, rose into existence the great Ionian League; and thus was opened to the ambition of Athens the splendid destiny of the empire of the Grecian Seas. The pre-eminence of Sparta passed away from her, though invisibly and without a struggle, and retiring within herself, she was probably unaware of the decline of her authority;—still seeing her Peloponnesian allies gathering round her, subordinate and submissive; and, by refusing assistance, refusing also allegiance, to the new queen of the Ionian League. His task fulfilled, Aristides probably returned to Athens, and it was at this time and henceforth that it became his policy to support the power of Cimon against the authority of Themistocles.* To that eupatrid, joined before with himself, was now entrusted the command of the Grecian fleet.

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* Plut. in vit. Cimon. Before this period, Cimon, though rising into celebrity, could scarcely have been an adequate rival to Themistocles.

To great natural abilities, Cimon added every advantage of birth and circumstance. His mother was a daughter of Olorus, a Thracian prince; his father the great Miltiades. On the death of the latter, it is recorded, and popularly believed, that Cimon, unable to pay the fine to which Miltiades was adjudged, was detained in custody until a wealthy marriage made by his sister Elpinice, to whom he was tenderly, and ancient scandal whispered improperly, attached, released him from confinement, and the brother-in-law paid the debt. "Thus severe and harsh," says Nepos, "was his entrance upon manhood."* But it is very doubtful whether Cimon was ever imprisoned for the state-debt incurred by his father—and his wealth appears to have been considerable even before he regained his patrimony in the Chersonese, or enriched himself with the Persian spoils.†

In early youth, like Themistocles, his conduct had been wild and dissolute;[*] and with his father from a child, he had acquired, with the experience, something of the licence, of camps. Like Themistocles also, he was little skilled in the graceful accomplishments of his countrymen; he cultivated neither the art of music, nor the brilliancies of Attic conversation; but power and fortune, which ever soften nature, afterwards rendered his habits intellectual, and his tastes refined. He had not the smooth and artful affability of Themistocles, but to a certain roughness of manner was conjoined that hearty and ingenuous frankness, which ever conciliates mankind, especially in free states, and which is yet more popular when united to rank. He had distinguished himself highly by his zeal in the invasion of the Medes, and the desertion of Athens for Salamis; and his valour in the sea-fight had confirmed the promise of his previous ardour. Nature had gifted him with a handsome countenance and a majestic stature, recommendations in all, but especially in popular, states—and the son of Miltiades was welcomed, not less by the people than by the nobles, when he applied for a share in the administration of the state. Associated with Aristides, first in the embassy to Sparta, and subsequently in the expeditions to Cyprus and Byzantium, he had profited by the friendship and the lessons of that great man, to whose party he belonged, and who saw in Cimon a less invidious opponent than himself to the policy or the ambition of Themistocles.

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* Corn. Nep. in vit. Cim.

† According to Diodorus, Cimon early in life made a very wealthy marriage: Themistocles recommended him to a rich father-in-law, in a witticism, which, with a slight variation, Plutarch has also recorded, though he does not give its application to Cimon.

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[*] Corn. Nep. in vit. Cim.

By the advice of Aristides, Cimon early sought every means to conciliate the allies, and to pave the way to the undivided command he afterwards obtained. And it is not improbable that Themistocles might willingly have ceded to him the lead in a foreign expedition, which removed from the city so rising and active an opponent. The appointment of Cimon promised to propitiate the Spartans, who ever possessed a certain party in the aristocracy of Athens—who peculiarly affected Cimon, and whose hardy character and oligarchical policy, the blunt genius and hereditary prejudices of that young noble were well fitted to admire and to imitate. Cimon was, in a word, precisely the man desired by three parties as the antagonist of Themistocles; viz. the Spartans, the nobles, and Aristides, himself a host. All things conspired to raise the son of Miltiades to an eminence beyond his years, but not his capacities.

XIX. Under Cimon the Athenians commenced their command,* by marching against a Thra-

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* Thucyd. lib. i.

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B.C. 476.

cian town called Eion, situated on the banks of the river Strymon, and now garrisoned by a Persian noble. The town was besieged, and the inhabitants pressed by famine, when the Persian commandant collecting his treasure upon a pile of wood, on which were placed his slaves, women, and children—set fire to the pile.* After this suicide, seemingly not an uncommon mode of self-slaughter in the East, the garrison surrendered, and its defenders, as usual in such warfare, were sold for slaves.

From Eion, the victorious confederates proceeded to Scyros, a small island in the Ægæan, inhabited by the Dolopians, a tribe addicted to piratical practices, deservedly obnoxious to the traders of the Ægæan, and who already had attracted the indignation and vengeance of the Amphictyonic assembly. The isle occupied, and the pirates expelled, the territory was colonized by an Attic population.

An ancient tradition had, as we have seen before, honoured the soil of Scyros with the possession of the bones of the Athenian Theseus—some years after the conquest of the isle, in the archonship of Aphepsion,† or Apsephion, an oracle ordained the Athenians to search for the remains of their national hero, and the skeleton of a man of great stature, with a lance of brass and a sword, by its side, was discovered, and immediately appropriated to Theseus. The bones were placed with great ceremony in the galley of Cimon, who was then probably on a visit of inspection to the new colony, and transported to Athens. Games were instituted in honour of this event, B.C. 469. at which were exhibited the contests of the tragic poets; and, in the first of these, Sophocles is said to have made his earliest appearance, and gained the prize from Æschylus.

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* Thucyd. lib. i. Plut. in vit. Cim. Diod. Sic. lib. xi.

† See Clinton, Fast. Hell. vol. ii. p. 34, in comment upon Bentley.

XXI. It is about the period of Cimon's conquest of Eion and Scyros, that we must date the declining power of Themistocles. That remarkable man had already added, both to domestic B.C. 476. and to Spartan enmities, the general displeasure of the allies. After baffling the proposition of the Spartans to banish from the Amphictyonic assembly, the states that had not joined in the anti-Persic confederacy, he had sailed round the isles and extorted money from such as had been guilty of Medising: the pretext might be just, but the exactions were unpopularly levied. Nor is it improbable that the accusations against him of enriching his own coffers, as well as the public treasury, had some foundation. Pro-

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foundly disdaining money save as a means to an end—he was little scrupulous as to the sources whence he sustained a power which he yet applied conscientiously to patriotic purposes. Serving his country first, he also served himself; and honest upon one grand and systematic principle, he was often dishonest in details.

His natural temper was also ostentatious: like many who have risen from an origin comparatively humble, he had the vanity to seek to outshine his superiors in birth—not more by the splendour of genius than by the magnificence of parade. At the Olympic games, the base-born son of Neocles surpassed the pomp of the wealthy and illustrious Cimon; his table was hospitable, and his own life soft and luxuriant;* his retinue numerous, beyond those of his contemporaries; and he adopted the manners of the noble exactly in proportion as he courted the favour of the populace. This habitual ostentation could not fail to mingle with the political hostilities of the aristocracy, the disdainful jealousies of offended pride; for it is ever the weakness of the high-born to forgive less easily the being excelled in genius, than the being outshone in state, by those of inferior origin. The same haughtiness which offended the nobles began also to displease the people; the superb consciousness of his own merits wounded the vanity of a nation which scarcely permitted its greatest men to share the reputation it arrogated to itself. The frequent calumnies uttered against him, obliged Themistocles to refer to the actions he had performed; and what it had been illustrious to execute, it became disgustful to repeat. "Are you weary," said the great man, bitterly, "to receive benefits often from the same hand?"* He offended the national conceit yet more by building, in the neighbourhood of his own residence, a temple to Diana, under the name of Aristobule, or 'Diana of the best counsel;'—thereby appearing to claim to himself the merit of giving the best counsels.

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* Athenæus, lib. xii.

It is probable, however, that Themistocles would have conquered all party opposition, and that his high qualities would have more than counterbalanced his defects in the eyes of the people, if he had still continued to lead the popular tide. But the time had come when the demagogue was outbid by an aristocrat—when the Movement he no longer headed, left him behind, and the genius of an individual could no longer keep pace with the giant strides of an advancing people.

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* Plut. in vit. Them.

XXII. The victory at Salamis was followed by a democratic result. That victory had been obtained by the seamen, who were mostly of the lowest of the populace—the lowest of the populace began therefore to claim, in political equality, the reward of military service. And Aristotle, whose penetrating intellect could not fail to notice the changes which an event so glorious to Greece produced in Athens, has adduced a similar instance of change at Syracuse, when the mariners of that state, having, at a later period, conquered the Athenians, converted a mixed republic to a pure democracy. The destruction of houses and property by Mardonius—the temporary desertion by the Athenians of their native land—the common danger and the common glory, had broken down many of the old distinctions, and the *spirit* of the nation was already far more democratic than the *constitution*. Hitherto, qualifications of property were demanded for the holding of civil offices. But after the battle of Platæa, Aristides, the leader of the aristocratic party, proposed and carried the abolition of such qualifications, allowing to all citizens, with or without property, a share in the government, and ordaining that the archons should be chosen out of the whole body; the form of investigation as to moral character was

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still indispensable. This change, great as it was, appears, like all aristocratic reforms, to have been a compromise* between concession and demand. And the prudent Aristides yielded what was inevitable, to prevent the greater danger of resistance. It may be ever remarked, that the people value more a concession from the aristocratic party, than a boon from their own popular leaders. The last can never equal, and the first can so easily exceed, the public expectation.

XXIII. This decree, uniting the aristocratic with the more democratic party, gave Aristides and his friends an unequivocal ascendency over Themistocles, which, however, during the absence of Aristides and Cimon, and the engrossing excitement of events abroad, was not plainly visible for some years; and although, on his return to Athens, Aristides himself prudently forbore taking an active part against his ancient rival, he yet lent all the influence of his name and friendship to the now powerful and popular Cimon. The victories, the manners, the wealth, the birth, of the son of Miltiades, were supported by his talents and his ambition. It was obvious to himself and to his party, that, were Themistocles removed, Cimon would become the first citizen of Athens.

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* Plut. in vit Arist.

XXIV. Such were the causes that long secretly undermined, that at length openly stormed, the authority of the hero of Salamis; and at this juncture we may conclude, that the vices of his character avenged themselves on the virtues. His duplicity and spirit of intrigue, exercised on behalf of his country, it might be supposed, would hereafter be excited against it. And the pride, the ambition, the craft, that had saved the people, might serve to create a despot.

Themistocles was summoned to the ordeal of the ostracism, and condemned by the majority B.C. 471. of suffrages. Thus, like Aristides, not punished for offences, but paying the honourable penalty of rising by genius to that state of eminence, which threatens danger to the equality of republics.

He departed from Athens, and chose his refuge at Argos, whose hatred to Sparta, his deadliest foe, promised him the securest protection.

XXV. Death soon afterwards removed Aristides from all competitorship with Cimon; according to the most probable accounts he died at Athens; and at the time of Plutarch his monument was still to be seen at Phalerum. His countrymen, who, despite all plausible charges, were never ungrateful except where their liberties appeared emperilled, (whether rightly or erroneously our documents are too scanty to prove,) erected his monument at the public charge, portioned his three daughters, and awarded to his son Lysimachus, a grant of one hundred minæ of silver, a plantation of one hundred plethra* of land, and a pension of four drachmæ a day (double the allowance of an Athenian ambassador.)

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* About twenty-three English acres. This was by no means a despicable estate in the confined soil of Attica.

CHAPTER II.

POPULARITY, AND POLICY OF CIMON—NAXOS REVOLTS FROM THE IONIAN LEAGUE—IS BESIEGED BY CIMON—CONSPIRACY AND FATE OF PAUSANIAS—FLIGHT AND ADVENTURES OF THEMISTOCLES—HIS DEATH.

I. The military abilities and early habits of Cimon, naturally conspired with past success to direct his ambition rather to warlike than to civil distinctions. But he was not inattentive to the arts which were necessary in a democratic state to secure and confirm his power. Succeeding to one, once so beloved and ever so affable as Themistocles, he sought carefully to prevent all disadvantageous contrast. From the spoils of Byzantium and Sestos, he received a vast addition to his hereditary fortunes. And by the distribution of his treasures, he forestalled all envy at their amount. He threw open his gardens to the public, whether foreigners or citizens—he maintained a table to which men of every rank freely resorted, though probably those only of his own tribe[*]—he was attended by a numerous train, who were ordered to give mantles to what citizen soever—aged and ill-clad—they encountered; and to relieve the necessitous by alms delicately and secretly administered. By these artful devices, he rendered himself beloved, and concealed the odium of his politics beneath the mask of his charities. For while he courted the favour, he advanced not the wishes, of the people. He sided with the aristocratic party, and did not conceal his attachment to the oligarchy of Sparta. He sought to content the people with himself, in order that he might the better prevent discontent with their position. But it may be doubted whether Cimon did not, far more than any of his predecessors, increase the dangers of a democracy, by vulgarizing its spirit. The system of general alms and open tables, had the effect that the abuses of the Poor Laws[†] have had with us. It accustomed the native poor to the habits of

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[*] Aristot. apud Plut. vit. Cim.

[†] Produced equally by the anti-popular party on popular pretexts. It was under the sanction of Mr. Pitt, that the prostitution of charity to the able-bodied was effected in England.

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indolent paupers, and what at first was charity soon took the aspect of a right. Hence much of the lazy turbulence, and much of that licentious spirit of exaction from the wealthy, that in a succeeding age characterized the mobs of Athens. So does that servile generosity, common to an anti-popular party, when it affects kindness in order to prevent concession, ultimately operate against its own secret schemes. And so much less really dangerous is it to exalt, by constitutional enactments, the authority of a people, than to pamper, by the electioneering cajoleries of a selfish ambition, the prejudices which thus settle into vices, or the momentary exigencies thus fixed into permanent demands.

II. While the arts or manners of Cimon conciliated the favour, his integrity won the esteem, of the people. In Aristides he found the example, not more of his aristocratic politics than of his lofty honour. A deserter from Persia having arrived at Athens with great treasure, and being harassed by informers, sought the protection of Cimon, by gifts of money.

"Would you have me," said the Athenian, smiling, "your mercenary, or your friend?"

"My friend!" replied the Barbarian.

"Then take back your gifts."*

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* Plut. in vit. Cim.

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III. In the meanwhile the new ascendency of Athens was already endangered. The Carystians in the neighbouring isle of Eubœa openly defied her fleet, and many of the confederate states, seeing themselves delivered from all immediate dread of another invasion of the Medes, began to cease contributions both to the Athenian navy and the common treasury. For a danger not imminent, service became burthensome, and taxation odious. And already some well-founded jealousy of the ambition of Athens increased the reluctance to augment her power. Naxos was the first island that revolted from the conditions of the league, and thither Cimon, having reduced the Carystians, led a fleet numerous and well-equipped.

Whatever the secret views of Cimon for the aggrandizement of his country, he could not but feel himself impelled by his own genius and the popular expectation, not lightly to forego that empire of the sea, rendered to Athens by the profound policy of Themistocles and the fortunate prudence of Aristides; and every motive of Grecian, as well as Athenian, policy justified the subjugation of the revolters — an evident truth in the science of state policy, but one somewhat hastily lost sight of by those historians, who, in the subsequent and unlooked-for results, forgot the necessity of the earlier enterprise. Greece had voluntarily entrusted to Athens the maritime command of the confederate states. To her, Greece must consequently look for no diminution of the national resources committed to her charge ; to her, that the conditions of the league were fulfilled, and the common safety of Greece ensured. Commander of the forces, she was answerable for the deserters. Nor, although Persia at present remained tranquil and inert, could the confederates be considered safe from her revenge. No compact of peace had been procured. The more than suspected intrigues of Xerxes with Pausanias, were sufficient proofs that the Great King did not yet despair of the conquest of Greece. And the peril previously incurred in the want of union amongst the several states, was a solemn warning not to lose the advantages of that league, so tardily and so laboriously cemented. Without great dishonour, and without great imprudence, Athens could not forego the control with which she had been invested ; if it were her's to provide the means, it was her's to punish the defaulters ; and her duty to Greece thus decorously and justly sustained her ambition for herself.

IV. And now it is necessary to return to the fortunes of Pausanias, involving in their fall the ruin of one of far loftier virtues and more unequivocal renown. The recal of Pausanias, the fine inflicted upon him, his narrow escape from a heavier sentence, did not suffice to draw him, intoxicated as he was with his hopes and passions, from his bold and perilous intrigues. It is not improbable that his mind was already tainted with a certain insanity.* And it is a curious physiological fact, that the unnatural constraints of Sparta, when acting on strong passions and fervent imaginations, seem, not unoften, to have produced a species of madness. An anecdote is recorded,† which, though romantic, is not perhaps wholly fabulous, and which invests with an interest yet more dramatic, the fate of the conqueror of Platæa.

At Byzantium, runs the story, he became passionately enamoured of a young virgin named Cleonice. Awed by his power and his sternness, the parents yielded her to his will. The modesty of the maiden made her stipulate that the room might be in total darkness when she stole to his embraces. But unhappily, on entering, she stumbled against the light, and the Spartan, asleep at the time, imagined, in the confusion of his sudden waking, that the noise

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* His father's brother, Cleomenes, died raving mad, as we have already seen. There was therefore insanity in the family.

† Plut. in vit. Cim. Pausanias, lib. iii. c. 17.

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was occasioned by one of his numerous enemies seeking his chamber with the intent to assassinate him. Seizing the Persian cimiter* that lay beside him, he plunged it in the breast of the intruder, and the object of his passion fell dead at his feet. "From that hour," says the biographer, "he could rest no more!" A spectre haunted his nights—the voice of the murdered girl proclaimed doom to his ear. It is added, and if we extend our belief farther, we must attribute the apparition to the skill of the priests, that, still tortured by the ghost of Cleonice, he applied to those celebrated necromancers who, at Heraclea,† summoned by gloomy spells the manes of the dead, and by their aid invoked the spirit he sought to appease. The shade of Cleonice appeared and told him, "that soon after his return to Sparta he would be delivered from all his troubles." ‡

Such was the legend repeated, as Plutarch tells us, by many historians; the deed itself was probable, and conscience, even without necromancy, might supply the spectre.

V. Whether or not this story have any foundation in fact, the conduct of Pausanias seems at least to have partaken of that inconsiderate recklessness which, in the ancient superstition, preceded the vengeance of the gods. After his trial, he had returned to Byzantium, without the consent of the Spartan government. Driven thence by the resentment of the Athenians,* he repaired not to Sparta, but to Colonæ, in Asia-Minor, and in the vicinity of the ancient Troy; and there he renewed his negotiations with the Persian king. Acquainted with his designs, the vigilant Ephors despatched to him a herald with the famous scytale. This was an instrument peculiar to the Spartans. To every general, or admiral, a long black staff was entrusted; the magistrates kept another exactly similar. When they had any communication to make, they wrote it on a roll of parchment, applied it to their own staff, fold upon fold—then cutting it off dismissed it to the chief. The characters were so written that they were confused and unintelligible until fastened to the stick, and thus could only be construed by the person for whose eye they were intended, and to whose care the staff was confided.

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* Pausanias, lib. iii. c. 17.

† Phigalea, according to Pausanias.

‡ Plut. in vit. Cim.

The communication Pausanias now received was indeed stern and laconic. "Stay," it said, "behind the herald, and war is proclaimed against you by the Spartans."

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* Thucyd. lib. i.

On receiving this solemn order, even the imperious spirit of Pausanias did not venture to disobey. Like Venice, whose harsh, tortuous, but energetic policy, her oligarchy in so many respects resembled, Sparta possessed a moral and mysterious power over the fiercest of her sons. His fate held him in her grasp, and, confident of acquittal, instead of flying to Persia, the Regent hurried to his doom, assured that by the help of gold, he could baffle any accusation. His expectations were so far well-founded, that, although, despite his rank as regent of the kingdom and guardian of the king, he was thrown into prison by the Ephors, he succeeded, by his intrigues and influence, in procuring his enlargement: and boldly challenging his accusers, he offered to submit to trial.

The government, however, was slow to act. The proud caution of the Spartans was ever loth to bring scandal on their home by public proceedings against any freeborn citizen—how much more against the uncle of their monarch and the hero of their armies! His power, his talents, his imperious character, awed alike private enmity and public distrust. But his haughty disdain of their rigid laws, and his continued affectation of the barbarian pomp, kept the government vigilant; and though released from prison, the stern Ephors were his sentinels. The restless and discontented mind of the expectant son-in-law of Xerxes, could not relinquish its daring schemes. And the regent of Sparta entered into a conspiracy, on which it were much to be desired, that our information were more diffuse.

VI. Perhaps no class of men in ancient times excite a more painful and profound interest than the Helots of Sparta. Though, as we have before seen, we must reject all rhetorical exaggerations of the savage cruelty to which they were subjected, we know, at least, that their servitude was the hardest, imposed by any of the Grecian states upon their slaves,* and that the iron soldiery of Sparta were exposed to constant and imminent peril from their revolts—a proof that the curse of their bondage had passed beyond the degree which subdues the spirit to that which arouses, and that neither the habit of years, nor the swords of the fiercest warriors, nor the spies of the keenest government, of Greece, had been able utterly to extirpate from human hearts that law of nature which, when injury passes an allotted, yet rarely visible, extreme, converts suffering to resistance.

Scattered, in large numbers, throughout the rugged territories of Laconia,—separated from the presence, but not the watch of their master, these singular serfs never abandoned the hope of liberty. Often pressed into battle to aid their masters, they acquired the courage to oppose them. Fierce, sullen, and vindictive, they were as droves of wild cattle, left to range at will, till wanted for the burthen or the knife,—not difficult to butcher, but impossible to tame.

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* Plato, leg. vi.

We have seen that a considerable number of these helots had fought as light-armed troops at Platæa; and the common danger and the common glory had united the slaves of the army with the chief. Entering into somewhat of the desperate and revengeful ambition that, under a similar constitution, animated Marino Faliero, Pausanias sought, by means of the enslaved multitude, to deliver himself from the thraldom of the oligarchy, which held prince and slave alike in subjection. He tampered with the helots, and secretly promised them the rights and liberties of citizens of Sparta, if they would co-operate with his projects, and revelt at his command.

Slaves are never without traitors; and the Ephors learnt the premeditated revolution from helots themselves. Still, slow and wary, those subtle and haughty magistrates suspended the blow — it was not without the fullest proof that a royal Spartan was to be condemned on the word of helots: they continued their vigilance — they obtained the proof they required.

VII. Argilius, a Spartan, with whom Pausanias had once formed the vicious connexion common to the Doric tribes, and who was deep in his confidence, was entrusted by the regent with letters to Artabazus. Argilius called to mind that none entrusted with a similar mission had ever returned. He broke open the seals, and read what his fears foreboded, that on his arrival at the satrap's court, the silence of the messenger was to be purchased by his death. He carried the packet to the Ephors. That dark and plotting council were resolved yet more entirely to entangle their guilty victim, and out of his own mouth to extract his secret; they therefore ordered Argilius to take refuge as a suppliant in the sanctuary of the temple of Neptune on Mount Tænarus. Within the sacred confines was contrived a cell, which, by a double partition, admitted some of the Ephors, who, there concealed, might witness all that passed.

Intelligence was soon brought to Pausanias, that, instead of proceeding to Artabazus, his

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confidant had taken refuge as a suppliant, in the temple of Neptune. Alarmed and anxious, the regent hastened to the sanctuary. Argilius informed him that he had read the letters, and reproached him bitterly with his treason to himself. Pausanias, confounded and overcome by the perils which surrounded him, confessed his guilt, spoke unreservedly of the contents of the letter, implored the pardon of Argilius, and promised him safety and wealth if he would leave the sanctuary and proceed on the mission.

The Ephors, from their hiding-place, heard all.

On the departure of Pausanias from the sanctuary, his doom was fixed. But amongst the more public causes of the previous delay of justice, we must include the friendship of some of the Ephors, which Pausanias had won or purchased. It was the moment fixed for his arrest. Pausanias, in the streets, was alone and on foot. He beheld the Ephors approaching him. A signal from one warned him of his danger. He turned—he fled. The temple of Minerva Chalciœcus at hand proffered a sanctuary—he gained the sacred confines, and entered a small house hard by the temple. The Ephors—the officers—the crowd, pursued; they surrounded the refuge, from which it was impious to drag the criminal. Resolved on his death, they removed the roof—blocked up the entrances—(and if we may credit the anecdote, that violating human — was characteristic of Spartan — nature, his mother, a crone of great age,* suggested the means of punishment, by placing, with her own hand, a stone at the threshold)—and setting a guard around, left the conqueror of Mardonius to die of famine. When he was at his last gasp, unwilling to profane the sanctuary by his actual death, they bore him out into the open air, which he only breathed to expire.† His corpse, which some of the fiercer Spartans at first intended to cast in the place of burial for malefactors, was afterwards buried in the neighbourhood of the temple. And thus ended the glory and the crimes—the grasping ambition and the luxurious ostentation—of the bold Spartan, who first scorned, and then imitated, the effeminacies of the Persian he subdued.

VIII. Amidst the documents of which the

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* Nep. in vit. Paus.

† Pausanias observes that his renowned namesake was the only suppliant taking refuge at the sanctuary of Minerva Chalciœcus, who did not obtain the divine protection, and this because he could never purify himself of the murder of Cleonice.

Ephors possessed themselves after the death of Pausanias, was a correspondence with Themistocles, then residing in the rival and inimical state of Argos. Yet vindictive against that hero, the Spartan government despatched ambassadors to Athens, accusing him of a share in the conspiracy of Pausanias with the Medes. It seems that Themistocles did not disavow a correspondence with Pausanias, nor affect an absolute ignorance of his schemes, but he firmly denied by letter, his only mode of defence, all approval and all participation of the latter. Nor is there any proof, nor any just ground of suspicion, that he was a party to the betrayal of Greece. It was consistent, indeed, with his astute character, to plot, to manœuvre, to intrigue, but for great and not paltry ends. By possessing himself of the secret, he possessed himself of the power, of Pausanias; and that intelligence might perhaps have enabled him to frustrate the Spartan's treason in the hour of actual danger to Greece. It is possible, that so far as Sparta alone was concerned, the Athenian felt little repugnance to any revolution, or any péril confined to a state whose councils it had been the object of his life to baffle, and whose power it was the manifest interest of his native city to impair. He might have looked with complacency on the intrigues which the regent was carrying on against the Spartan government, and which threatened to shake that Doric constitution to its centre. But nothing, either in the witness of history, or in the character or conduct of a man profoundly patriotic, even in his vices, favours the notion that he connived at the schemes, which implicated, with the Grecian, the Athenian welfare. Pausanias, far less able, was probably his tool. By an insight into his projects, Themistocles might have calculated on the restoration of his own power. To weaken the Spartan influence, was to weaken his own enemies at Athens; to break up the Spartan constitution, was to leave Athens herself without a rival. And if, from the revolt of the helots, Pausanias should proceed to an active league with the Persians, Themistocles knew enough of Athens and of Greece, to foresee that it was to the victor of Salamis, and the founder of the Grecian navy, that all eyes would be directed. Such seem the most probable views which would have been opened to the exile by the communications of Pausanias. If so, they were necessarily too subtle for the crowd to penetrate or understand. The Athenians heard only the accusations of the Spartans; they saw only the treason of Pausanias; they learnt only that Themis-

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tocles had been the correspondent of the traitor. Already suspicious of a genius, whose deep and intricate wiles they were seldom able to fathom, and trembling at the seeming danger they had escaped, it was natural enough that the Athenians should accede to the demands of the ambassadors. An Athenian, joined with a Lacedæmonian troop, was ordered to seize Themistocles wherever he should be found. Apprised of his danger, he hastily quitted the Peloponnesus, and took refuge at Corcyra. Fear of the vengeance at once of Athens and of Sparta induced the Corcyreans to deny the shelter he sought, but they honourably transported him to the opposite continent. His route was discovered—his pursuers pressed upon him. He had entered the country of Admetus, king of the Molossians, from whose resentment he had everything to dread. For he had persuaded the Athenians to reject the alliance once sought by that monarch, and Admetus had vowed vengeance.

Thus situated, the fugitive formed a resolution which a great mind only could have conceived, and which presents to us one of the most touching pictures in ancient history. He repaired to the palace of Admetus himself. The prince was absent. He addressed his consort, and, advised by her, took the young child of the royal pair in his hand, and sate down at the hearth,—"THEMISTOCLES THE SUPPLIANT!"* On the return of the prince he told his name, and bade him not wreak his vengeance on an exile. "To condemn me now," he said, "would be to take advantage of distress. Honour dictates revenge only amongst equals upon equal terms. True that I opposed you once, but on a matter not of life, but of business or of interest. Now surrender me to my persecutors, and you deprive me of the last refuge of life itself."

IX. Admetus, much affected, bade him rise, and assured him of protection. The pursuers arrived; but faithful to the guest who had sought his hearth, after a form peculiarly solemn amongst the Molossians, Admetus refused to give him up, and despatched him, guarded, to the sea-town of Pydna, over an arduous and difficult mountain-road. The sea-town gained, he took ship, disguised and unknown to all the passengers, in a trading vessel, bound to Ionia. A storm arose—the vessel was driven from its course, and impelled right towards the Athenian fleet, that then under Cimon, his bitterest foe, lay before the Isle of Naxos. B.C. 466.

Prompt and bold in his expedients, Themistocles took aside the master of the vessel—discovered himself; threatened, if betrayed, to inform against the master as one bribed to favour his escape; promised, if preserved, everlasting gratitude; and urged, that the preservation was possible, if no one during the voyage were permitted, on any pretext, to quit the vessel.

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* Thucyd. lib. i. 136.

The master of the vessel was won—kept out at sea a day and a night to windward of the fleet, and landed Themistocles in safety at Ephesus.

In the meanwhile, the friends of Themistocles had not been inactive in Athens. On the supposed discovery of his treason, such of his property as could fall into the hands of the government, was, as usual in such offences, confiscated to the public use; the amount was variously estimated at eighty and a hundred talents.* But the greater part of his wealth—some from Athens, some from Argos—was secretly conveyed to him at Ephesus.† One faithful friend procured the escape of his wife and children from Athens, to the court of Admetus, for which offence of affection, a single historian, Stesimbrotus, (whose statement even the credulous Plutarch questions, and proves to be contradictory with another assertion of the same author,) has recorded that he was condemned to death by Cimon. It is not upon such dubious chronicles that we can suffer so great a stain on the character of a man singularly humane.*

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* Plut. in vit. Them.

† Thucyd. lib. i. 137.

X. As we have now for ever lost sight of Themistocles on the stage of Athenian politics, the present is the most fitting opportunity to conclude the history of his wild and adventurous career.

Persecuted by the Spartans, abandoned by his countrymen, excluded from the whole of Greece, no refuge remained to the man who had crushed the power of Persia, save the Persian court. The generous and high-spirited policy that characterized the Oriental Despotism towards its foes, proffered him not only a safe, but a magnificent asylum. The Persian monarchs were ever ready to welcome the exiles of Greece, and to conciliate those whom they had failed to conquer. It was the fate of Themistocles to be saved by the enemies of his country. He had no alternative. The very accusation of connivance with the Medes drove him into their arms.

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* Mr. Mitford, while doubting the fact, attempts, with his usual disingenuousness, to raise upon the very fact that he doubts, reproaches against the horrors of democratical despotism. A strange practice for an historian to allow the premises to be false, and then to argue upon them as true!

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Under guidance of a Persian, Themistocles traversed the Asiatic continent; and ere he reached Susa, contrived to have a letter, that might prepare the way for him, delivered at the Persian court. His letter ran somewhat thus, if we may suppose that Thucydides preserved the import, though he undoubtedly fashioned the style.*

" I, Themistocles, who of all the Greeks have inflicted the severest wounds upon your race, so long as I was called by fate to resist the invasion of the Persians, now come to you." (He then urged, on the other hand, the services he had rendered to Xerxes in his messages after Salamis, relative to the breaking of the bridges, assuming a credit to which he was by no means entitled—and insisted that his generosity demanded a return.) " Able" (he proceeded) " to perform great services—persecuted by the Greeks for my friendship for you—I am near at hand. Grant me only a year's respite, that I may then apprise you in person of the object of my journey hither."

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* The brief letter to Artaxerxes, given by Thucydides, (lib i. 137,) is as evidently the composition of Thucydides himself, as is the celebrated oration which he puts into the mouth of Pericles. Each has the hard, rigid, and grasping style so peculiar to the historian, and to which no other Greek writer bears the slightest resemblance. But the matter may be more genuine than the diction.

The bold and confident tone of Themistocles struck the imagination of the young king, (Artaxerxes,) and he returned a favourable reply. Themistocles consumed the year in the perfect acquisition of the language, and the customs and manners of the country. He then sought and obtained an audience.*

Able to converse with fluency, and without the medium of an interpreter, his natural abilities found their level. He rose to instant favour. Never before had a stranger been so honoured. He was admitted an easy access to the royal person—instructed in the learning of the Magi—and when he quitted the court it was to take possession of the government of three cities—Myus, celebrated for its provisions; Lampsacus, for its vineyards; and Magnesia, for the richness of the soil; so that, according to the spirit and phraseology of oriental taxation, it was not unaptly said that they were awarded to him for meat, wine, and bread.

XI. Thus affluent, and thus honoured, Themistocles passed at Magnesia the remainder of his days—the time and method of his death uncertain;—whether cut off by natural disease, or, as is otherwise related,* by a fate than which fiction itself could have invented none more suited to the consummation of his romantic and great career. It is said, that when afterwards Egypt revolted, and that revolt was aided by the Athenians;—when the Grecian navy sailed as

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* At the time of his arrival in Asia, Xerxes seems to have been still living. But he appeared at Susa during the short interval between the death of Xerxes and the formal accession of his son, when, by a sanguinary revolution, yet to be narrated, Artabanus was raised to the head of the Persian empire: ere the year expired Artaxerxes was on the throne.

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* I relate this latter account of the death of Themistocles, not only because Thucydides (though preferring the former) does not disdain to cite it; but also, because it is evident from the speech of Nicias, in the Knights of Aristophanes, l. 83, 84, that in the time of Pericles it was popularly believed by the Athenians that Themistocles died by poison; and from motives that rendered allusion to his death a popular *claptrap.* It is also clear that the death of Themistocles appears to have reconciled him at once to the Athenians. The previous suspicions of his fidelity to Greece do not seem to have been kept alive even by the virulence of party; and it is natural to suppose that it must have been some act of his own, real or imagined, which tended to disprove the plausible accusations against him, and revive the general enthusiasm in his favour. What could that act have been but the last of his life, which, in the lines of Aristophanes referred to above, is cited as the ideal of a glorious death! But if he died by poison the draught *was not bullock's blood*—the deadly nature of which was one of the vulgar fables of the ancients. In some parts of the continent it is, in this day, even used as medicine.

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B.C. 449.

far as Cilicia and Cyprus; and Cimon upheld, without a rival, the new sovereignty of the seas;—when Artaxerxes resolved to oppose the growing power of a state, which, from the defensive, had risen to the offending, power;—Themistocles received a mandate to realize the vague promises he had given, and to commence his operations against Greece. Then, (if with Plutarch we accept this version of his fate,) neither resentment against the people he had deemed ungrateful, nor his present pomp, nor the fear of life, could induce the lord of Magnesia to dishonour his past achievements,* and demolish his immortal trophies. Anxious only to die worthily—since to live as became him was no longer possible—he solemnly sacrificed to the gods—took leave of his friends, and finished his days by poison.

His monument long existed in the forum of Magnesia; but his bones are said, by his own desire, to have been borne back privately to Attica, and have rested in the beloved land that exiled him from her bosom. And this, his last request, seems touchingly to prove his loyalty to Athens, and to proclaim his pardon of her persecution. Certain it is, at least, that however honoured in Persia, he never perpetrated one act against Greece; and that if sullied by the suspicion of others, his fame was untarnished by himself. He died, according to Plutarch, in his sixty-fifth year, leaving many children, and transmitting his name to a long posterity, who received from his memory the honours they could not have acquired for themselves.

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* Plut. in vit. Them.

XII. The character of Themistocles has already in these pages unfolded itself—profound, yet tortuous in policy—vast in conception—subtle, patient, yet prompt in action; affable in manner, but boastful, ostentatious, and disdaining to conceal his consciousness of merit; not brilliant in accomplishment, yet master not more of the Greek wiles than the Attic wit; sufficiently eloquent, but greater in deeds than words, and penetrating by an almost preternatural insight, at once the characters of men, and the sequences of events. Incomparably the greatest of his own times, and certainly not surpassed by those who came after him. Pisistratus, Cimon, Pericles, Aristides himself, were of noble and privileged birth. Themistocles was the first, and, except Demosthenes, the greatest of those who rose from the ranks of the people, and he drew the people upward in his rise. His fame was the creation of his genius only. "What other man," (to paraphrase the unusual eloquence of Diodorus,) "could in the same time have placed Greece at the head of nations, Athens at the head of Greece, himself at the head of Athens?—in the most illustrious age the most illustrious man. Conducting to war the citizens of a state in ruins, he defeated all the arms of Asia. He alone had the power to unite the most discordant materials, and to render danger itself salutary to his designs. Not more remarkable in war than peace—in the one he saved the liberties of Greece, in the other he created the eminence of Athens."

After him, the light of the heroic age seems to glimmer and to fade, and even Pericles himself appears dwarfed and artificial beside that masculine and colossal intellect which broke into fragments the might of Persia, and baffled with a vigorous ease the gloomy sagacity of Sparta. The statue of Themistocles, existent six hundred years after his decease, exhibited to his countrymen an aspect as heroical as his deeds.*

We return to Cimon.

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* Plut. in vit. Them.

CHAPTER III.

REDUCTION OF NAXOS—ACTIONS OFF CYPRUS—MANNERS OF CIMON—IMPROVEMENTS IN ATHENS—COLONY AT THE NINE WAYS—SIEGE OF THASOS—EARTHQUAKE IN SPARTA—REVOLT OF HELOTS, OCCUPATION OF ITHOMË, AND THIRD MESSENIAN WAR—RISE AND CHARACTER OF PERICLES—PROSECUTION AND ACQUITTAL OF CIMON—THE ATHENIANS ASSIST THE SPARTANS AT ITHOMË—THASOS SURRENDERS—BREACH BETWEEN THE ATHENIANS AND SPARTANS—CONSTITUTIONAL INNOVATIONS AT ATHENS—OSTRACISM OF CIMON.

I. AT the time in which Naxos refused the stipulated subsidies, and was, in consequence, besieged by Cimon, that island was one of the most wealthy and populous of the confederate states. For some time the Naxians gallantly resisted the besiegers; but, at length reduced, they were subjected to heavier conditions than those previously imposed upon them. No conqueror contents himself with acquiring the objects, sometimes frivolous and often just, with which he commences hostilities. War inflames the passions, and success the ambition. Cimon, at first anxious to secure the Grecian, was now led on to desire the increase of the Athenian, power.

The Athenian fleet had subdued Naxos, and Naxos was rendered subject to Athens. This was the first of the free states which the growing republic submitted to her yoke.* The precedent once set, as occasion tempted, the rest shared a similar fate.

II. The reduction of Naxos was but the commencement of the victories of Cimon. In Asia Minor, there were many Grecian cities in which the Persian ascendency had never yet been shaken. Along the Carian coast, Cimon conducted his armament, and the terror it inspired sufficed to engage all the cities, originally Greek, to revolt from Persia; those garrisoned by Persians he besieged and reduced. Victorious in Caria, he passed with equal success into Lycia,† augmenting his fleet and forces as he swept along. But the Persians, not inactive, had now assembled a considerable force in Pamphylia, and lay encamped on the banks of the Eurymedon, whose waters, sufficiently wide, received their fleet. The expected reinforcement of eighty Phœnician vessels from Cyprus induced the Persians to delay‡ actual hostilities. But Cimon, resolved to forestall the anticipated junction, sailed up the river, and B.C. 466.

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* Thucyd. lib. i.

† Diod. lib. xi.

‡ Plut. in vit. Cim.

soon forced the Barbarian fleet, already much more numerous than his own, into active engagement. The Persians but feebly supported the attack; driven up the river, the crews deserted the ships, and hastened to join the army arrayed along the coast. Of the ships thus deserted, some were destroyed;—and two hundred triremes, taken by Cimon, yet more augmented his armament. But the Persians, now advanced to the verge of the shore, presented a long and formidable array, and Cimon, with some anxiety, saw the danger he incurred in landing troops already much harassed by the late action, while a considerable proportion of the hostile forces, far more numerous, were fresh and unfatigued. The spirit of the men, and their elation at the late victory, bore down the fears of the general; yet warm from the late action, he debarked his heavy-armed infantry, and with loud shouts the Athenians rushed upon the foe. The contest was fierce—the slaughter great. Many of the noblest Athenians fell in the action. Victory at length declared in favour of Cimon; the Persians were put to flight, and the Greeks remained masters of the battle and the booty—the last considerable. Thus, on the same day, the Athenians were victorious on both elements—an unprecedented glory, which led the rhetorical Plutarch to declare that Platæa and Salamis were outshone. Posterity, more discerning, estimates glory not by the greatness of the victory alone, but the justice of the cause. And even a skirmish, won by men struggling for liberty on their own shores, is more honoured than the proudest battle in which the conquerors are actuated by the desire of vengeance, or the lust of enterprise.

III. To the trophies of this double victory were soon added those of a third, obtained over the eighty vessels of the Phœnicians off the coast of Cyprus. These signal achievements spread the terror of the Athenian arms on remote as on Grecian shores. Without adopting the exaggerated accounts of injudicious authors, as to the number of ships and prisoners,* it seems certain, at least, that the amount of the booty was sufficient, in some degree, to create in Athens a moral revolution—swelling to a vast extent the fortunes of individuals, and augmenting the general taste for pomp, for luxury, and for splendour, which soon afterwards rendered Athens the most magnificent of the Grecian states.

The navy of Persia thus broken, her armies

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* Diod. (lib. xi.) reckons the number of prisoners at twenty thousand!—These exaggerations sink glory into burlesque.

BOOK IV. CHAP. III.

routed, the scene of action transferred to her own dominions—all designs against Greece were laid aside. Retreating, as it were, more to the centre of her vast domains, she left the Asiatic outskirts to the solitude, rather of exhaustion than of peace. "No troops," boasted the later rhetoricians, "came within a day's journey, on horseback, of the Grecian seas." From the Chelidonian isles on the Pamphylian coast, to those* twin rocks at the entrance of the Euxine, between which the sea, chafed by their rugged base, roars unappeasably through its mists of foam, no Persian galley was descried. Whether this was the cause of defeat, or of acknowledged articles of peace, has been disputed. But, as will be seen hereafter, of the latter all historical evidence is wanting.

In a subsequent expedition, Cimon, sailing from Athens with a small force, wrested the Thracian Chersonese from the Persians—an exploit which restored to him his own patrimony.

IV. Cimon was now at the height of his fame and popularity. His share of the booty, and the recovery of the Chersonese, rendered him by far the wealthiest citizen of Athens; and he continued to use his wealth to cement his power. His intercourse with other nations, his familiarity with the oriental polish and magnificence, served to elevate his manners from their early rudeness, and to give splendour to his tastes. If he had spent his youth amongst the wild soldiers of Miltiades, the leisure of his maturer years was cultivated by an intercourse with sages and poets. His passion for the sex, which even in its excesses tends to refine and to soften, made his only vice. He was the friend of every genius, and every art; and, the link between the lavish ostentation of Themistocles, and the intellectual grace of Pericles, he conducted as it were the insensible transition from the age of warlike glory to that of civil preeminence. He may be said to have contributed greatly to diffuse that atmosphere of poetry and of pleasure, which even the meanest of the free Athenians afterwards delighted to respire. He led the citizens more and more from the recesses of private life; and carried out that social policy commenced by Pisistratus, according to which all individual habits became merged into one animated, complex, and excited public. Thus, himself gay and convivial, addicted to company, wine, and women, he encouraged shows and spectacles, and invested them with new magnificence; he embellished the city with public buildings, and was the first to erect at

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* The Cyaneæ. Plin. vi. c. 12. Herod. iv. c. 85, &c. &c.

Athens those long colonnades — beneath the shade of which, sheltered from the western suns, that graceful people were accustomed to assemble and converse. The Agora, that universal home of the citizens, was planted by him, with the oriental planes; and the groves of Academe, the immortal haunt of Plato, were his work. That celebrated garden, associated with the grateful and bright remembrances of all which poetry can lend to wisdom, was, before the time of Cimon, a waste and uncultivated spot. It was his hand that intersected it with walks and alleys, and that poured through its green retreats the ornamental waters, so refreshing in those climes, and not common in the dry Attic soil, which now meandered in living streams, and now sparkled into fountains. Besides these works to embellish, he formed others to fortify, the city. He completed the citadel, hitherto unguarded on the south side; and it was from the Barbarian spoils deposited in the treasury, that the expenses of founding the Long Walls, afterwards completed, were defrayed.

V. In his conduct towards the allies, the natural urbanity of Cimon served to conceal a policy deep-laid and grasping. The other Athenian generals were stern and punctilious in their demands on the confederates; they required the allotted number of men, and, in default of the supply, increased the rigour of their exactions. Not so Cimon—from those whom the ordinary avocations of a peaceful life rendered averse to active service, he willingly accepted a pecuniary substitute, equivalent to the value of those ships or soldiers they should have furnished. These sums, devoted indeed to the general service, were yet appropriated to the uses of the Athenian navy; thus the states, hitherto warlike, were artfully suffered to lapse into peaceful and luxurious pursuits; and the confederates became at once, under the most lenient pretexts, enfeebled and impoverished by the very means which strengthened the martial spirit, and increased the fiscal resources, of the Athenians. The tributaries found too late, when they ventured at revolt, that they had parted with the facilities of resistance.*

In the meanwhile it was the object of Cimon to sustain the naval ardour and discipline of the Athenians; while the oar and the sword fell into disuse with the confederates, he kept the greater part of the citizens in constant rotation at maritime exercise or enterprise — until experience and increasing power with one, indolence and gradual subjection with the other, destroying the ancient equality in arms, made the Athenians masters, and their confederates subjects.*

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* Thucyd. lib. i. 99.

VI. According to the wise policy of the ancients, the Athenians never neglected a suitable opportunity to colonize; thus extending their dominion, while they drafted off the excess of their population, as well as the more enterprising spirits whom adventure tempted, or poverty aroused. The conquest of Eion had opened to the Athenians a new prospect of aggrandisement, of which they were now prepared to seize the advantages. Not far from Eion, and on the banks of the Strymon, was a place called the Nine Ways, afterwards Amphipolis, and which, from its locality and maritime conveniences, seemed especially calculated for the site of a new city. Thither ten thousand persons, some confederates, some Athenians, had been sent to establish a colony. The views of the Athenians were not, however, in this enterprise, bounded to its mere legitimate advantages. About the same time they carried on a dispute with the Thasians, relative to certain mines and places of trade on the opposite coasts of Thrace. The dispute was one of considerable nicety. The

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* Plut. in vit. Cim.

Athenians having conquered Eion and the adjacent territory, claimed the possession by right of conquest. The Thasians, on the other hand, had anciently possessed some of the mines and the monopoly of the commerce; they had joined in the confederacy; and asserting that the conquest had been made, if by Athenian arms, for the federal good, they demanded that the ancient privileges should revert to them. The Athenian government was not disposed to surrender a claim which proffered to avarice the temptation of mines of gold. The Thasians renounced the confederacy, and thus gave to the Athenians the very pretext for hostilities, which the weaker state should never permit to the more strong. While the colony proceeded to its destination, part of the Athenian fleet, under Cimon, sailed to Thasos—gained a victory by sea—landed on the island—and besieged the city.

Meanwhile the new colonizers had become masters of the Nine Ways, having dislodged the Edonian Thracians, its previous habitants. But hostility following hostility, the colonists were eventually utterly routed, and cut off in a pitched battle at Drabescus, in Edonia, by the united forces of all the neighbouring Thracians.

VII. The siege of Thasos still continued, and the besieged took the precaution to send B.C. 465.

to Sparta for assistance. That sullen state had long viewed with indignation the power of Athens; her younger warriors clamoured against the inert indifference with which a city, for ages so inferior to Sparta, had been suffered to gain the ascendency over Greece. In vain had Themistocles been removed; the inexhaustible genius of the people had created a second Themistocles in Cimon. The Lacedæmonians, glad of a pretext for quarrel, courteously received the Thasian ambassadors, and promised to distract the Athenian forces by an irruption into Attica. They were actively prepared in concerting measures for this invasion, when sudden and complicated afflictions, now to be related, forced them to abandon their designs, and confine their attention to themselves.

VIII. An earthquake, unprecedented in its violence, occurred in Sparta. In many places throughout Laconia, the rocky soil was rent asunder. From Mount Taygetus, which overhung the city, and on which the women of Lacedæmon were wont to hold their bacchanalian orgies, huge fragments rolled into the suburbs. The greater portion of the city was absolutely overthrown; and it is said, probably with exaggeration, that only five houses wholly escaped the shock. This terrible calamity did not cease suddenly as it came; its concussions were repeated; it buried alike men and treasure: could we credit Diodorus, no less than twenty thousand persons perished in the shock. Thus depopulated, impoverished, and distressed,—the enemies whom the cruelty of Sparta nursed within her bosom, resolved to seize the moment to execute their vengeance, and consummate her destruction. Under Pausanias, we have seen before, that the helots were already ripe for revolt. The death of that fierce conspirator checked, but did not crush, their designs of freedom. Now was the moment, when Sparta lay in ruins—now was the moment to realize their dreams. From field to field, from village to village, the news of the earthquake became the watchword of revolt. Uprose the helots—they armed themselves, they poured on—a wild and gathering and relentless multitude, resolved to slay by the wrath of man, all whom that of nature had yet spared. The earthquake that levelled Sparta, rent her chains; nor did the shock create one chasm so dark and wide as that between the master and the slave. B.C. 464.

It is one of the sublimest and most awful spectacles in history—that city in ruins—the earth still trembling—the grim and dauntless soldiery collected amidst piles of death and ruin; and in such a time, and such a scene, the multitude sensible, not of danger, but of wrong, and rising, not to succour, but to revenge:—all that should have disarmed a feebler enmity, giving fire to theirs; the dreadest calamity their blessing—dismay their hope: it was as if the Great Mother herself had summoned her children to vindicate the long-abused, the all inalienable heritage derived from her; and the stir of the angry elements was but the announcement of an armed and solemn union between Nature and the Oppressed.

IX. Fortunately for Sparta, the danger was not altogether unforeseen. After the confusion and horror of the earthquake, and while the people, dispersed, were seeking to save their effects, Archidamus, who, four years before, had succeeded to the throne of Lacedæmon, ordered the trumpets to sound as to arms. That wonderful superiority of man over matter which habit and discipline can effect, and which was ever so visible amongst the Spartans, constituted their safety at that hour. Forsaking the care of their property, the Spartans seized their arms, flocked around their king, and drew up in disciplined array. In her most imminent crisis, Sparta was thus saved. The helots approached, wild, disorderly, and tumultuous; they came intent only to plunder and to slay; they expected to find scattered and affrighted foes—they found a formidable army; their tyrants were still their lords. They saw, paused, and fled, scattering themselves over the country—exciting all they met to rebellion, and, soon, joined with the Messenians, kindred to them by blood and ancient reminiscences of heroic struggles, they seized that same Ithomë which their hereditary Aristodemus had before occupied with unforgotten valour. This they fortified; and occupying also the neighbouring lands, declared open war upon their lords. As the Messenians were the more worthy enemy, so the general insurrection is known by the name of the Third Messenian War.

X. While these events occurred in Sparta, Cimon, entrusting to others the continued siege of Thasos, had returned to Athens.* He found his popularity already shaken, and his power endangered. The democratic party had of late regained the influence it had lost on the exile

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* For the siege of Thasos lasted three years; in the second year we find Cimon marching to the relief of the Spartans; in fact, the siege of Thasos was not of sufficient importance to justify Cimon in a very prolonged absence from Athens.

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of Themistocles. Pericles, son of Xanthippus, (the accuser of Miltiades,) had, during the last six years, insensibly risen into reputation: the house of Miltiades was fated to bow before the race of Xanthippus, and hereditary opposition ended in the old hereditary results. Born of one of the loftiest families of Athens, distinguished by the fame as the fortunes of his father, who had been linked with Aristides in command of the Athenian fleet, and in whose name had been achieved the victory of Mycalë, the young Pericles found betimes an easy opening to his brilliant genius, and his high ambition. He had nothing to contend against but his own advantages. The beauty of his countenance, the sweetness of his voice, and the blandness of his address, reminded the oldest citizens of Pisistratus; and this resemblance is said to have excited against him a popular jealousy which he found it difficult to surmount. His youth was passed alternately in the camp and in the schools. He is the first of the great statesmen of his country who appears to have prepared himself for action by study; Anaxagoras, Pythoclides, and Damon, were his tutors, and he was early eminent in all the lettered accomplishments of his time. By degrees, accustoming the people to his appearance in public life, he became remarkable for an elaborate and empassioned eloquence, hitherto unknown. With his intellectual and meditative temperament all was science; his ardour in action regulated by long forethought, his very words by deliberate preparation. Till his time, oratory in its proper sense, as a study and an art, was uncultivated in Athens. Pisistratus is said to have been naturally eloquent, and the vigorous mind of Themistocles imparted at once persuasion and force to his counsels. But Pericles, aware of all the advantages to be gained by words, embellished words with every artifice that his imagination could suggest. His speeches were often written compositions, and the novel dazzle of their diction, and that consecutive logic which preparation alone can impart to language, became irresistible to a People that had itself become a Pericles. Universal civilisation, universal poetry, had rendered the audience susceptible and fastidious; they could appreciate the ornate and philosophical harangues of Pericles; and, the first to mirror to themselves the intellectual improvements they had made, the first to represent the grace and enlightenment, as Themistocles had been the first to represent the daring and enterprise, of his time, the son of

Xanthippus began already to eclipse that very Cimon, whose qualities prepared the way for him.

XI. We must not suppose that in the contests between the aristocratic and popular parties, the aristocracy were always on one side. Such a division is never to be seen in free constitutions. There is always a sufficient party of the nobles whom conviction, ambition, or hereditary predilections, will place at the head of the Popular Movement; and it is by members of the privileged order that the order itself is weakened. Athens in this respect, therefore, resembled England, and, as now in the latter state, so then at Athens, it was often the proudest, the wealthiest, the most high-born of the aristocrats that gave dignity and success to the progress of democratic opinion. There too, the vehemence of party frequently rendered politics an hereditary heir-loom; intermarriages kept together men of similar factions; and the memory of those who had been the martyrs or the heroes of a cause mingled with the creed of their descendants. Thus it was as natural that one of the race of that Clisthenes who had expelled the Pisistratidæ, and popularized the constitution, should embrace the more liberal side, as that a Russell should follow out, in one age, the principles for which his ancestor perished in another. So do our forefathers become sponsors for ourselves. The mother of Pericles was the descendant of Clisthenes, and though Xanthippus himself was of the same party as Aristides, we may doubt, by his prosecution of Miltiades, as well as by his connexion with the Alcmæonids, whether he ever cordially co-operated with the views and the ambition of Cimon. However this be, his brilliant son cast himself at once into the arms of the more popular faction, and opposed with all his energy the aristocratic predilections of Cimon. Not yet, however, able to assume the lead to which he aspired, (for it had now become a matter of time as well as intellect to rise,) he ranged himself under Ephialtes, a personage of whom history gives us too scanty details, although he enjoyed considerable influence, increased by his avowed jealousy of the Spartans and his own unimpeachable integrity.

XII. It is noticeable, that men who become the leaders of the public, less by the spur of passion, than by previous study and conscious talent—men whom thought and letters prepare for enterprise—are rarely eager to advance themselves too soon. Making politics a science, they are even fastidiously alive to the qualities and the experience demanded for great success; their very self-esteem renders them seemingly modest; they rely upon time and upon occasion; and, pushed forward rather by circumstance than their own exertions, it is long before their ambition and their resources are fully developed. Despite all his advantages, the rise of Pericles was gradual.

On the return of Cimon, the popular party deemed itself sufficiently strong to manifest its opposition. The expedition to Thasos had not been attended with results so glorious as to satisfy a people pampered by a series of triumphs. Cimon was deemed culpable for not having taken advantage of the access into Macedonia, and added that country to the Athenian empire. He was even suspected and accused of receiving bribes from Alexander, the king of Macedon. Pericles* is said to have taken at first an active part in this prosecution; but when the cause came on, whether moved by the instances of Cimon's sister, or made aware of the injustice of the accusation, he conducted himself favourably towards the accused. Cimon himself treated the

* Plut. in vit. Cim.

charges with a calm disdain; the result was worthy of Athens and himself. He was honourably acquitted.

XIII. Scarce was this impeachment over, when a Spartan ambassador arrived at Athens to implore her assistance against the helots; the request produced a vehement discussion.

Ephialtes strongly opposed the proposition to assist a city, sometimes openly, always heartily, inimical to Athens. "Much better," he contended, "to suffer her pride to be humbled, and her powers of mischief to be impaired." Ever supporting, and supported by, the Lacedæmonian party, whether at home or abroad, Cimon, on the other hand, maintained the necessity of marching to the relief of Sparta. "Do not," he said, almost sublimely—and his words are reported to have produced a considerable impression on that susceptible assembly—"do not suffer Greece to be mutilated, nor deprive Athens of *her companion!*"

The more generous and magnanimous counsel prevailed with a generous and magnanimous people; and Cimon was sent to the aid of Sparta, at the head of a sufficient force. It may be observed, as a sign of the political morality of the time, that the wrongs of the helots appear to have been forgotten. But such is the curse of slavery, that it unfits its victims to be free, except by preparations and degrees. And civilisation, humanity, and social order, are often enlisted on the wrong side, in behalf of the oppressors, from the licence and barbarity natural to the victories of the oppressed. A conflict between the negroes and the planters, in modern times, may not be unanalogous to that of the helots and Spartans; and it is often a fatal necessity to extirpate the very men we have maddened, by our own cruelties, to the savageness of beasts.

It would appear, that during the revolt of the helots and Messenians, which lasted ten years, the Athenians, under Cimon, marched twice* to the aid of the Spartans. In the first they
B.C. 461. probably drove the scattered insurgents into the
B.C. 461. city of Ithomë; in the second they besieged the
B.C. 463. city. In the interval Thasos surrendered: the inhabitants were compelled to level their walls, to give up their shipping, to pay the arrear of tribute, to defray the impost punctually in future, and to resign all claims on the continent and the mines.

XIV. Thus did the Athenians establish their footing on the Thracian continent, and obtain the possession of the golden mines, which they mistook for wealth. In the second expedition of the Athenians, the long-cherished jealousy between themselves and the Spartans could no longer be smothered. The former were applied to especially from their skill in sieges, and their very science galled perhaps the pride of the martial Spartans. While, as the true art of war was still so little understood, that even the Athenians were unable to carry the town by assault, and compelled to submit to the tedious operations of a blockade, there was ample leisure for those feuds, which the uncongenial habits and long rivalry of the two nations necessarily produced. Proud of their Dorian name, the Spartans looked on the Ionic race of Athens as aliens. Severe in their oligarchic discipline, they regarded the Athenian Demus as innovators; and, in the valour itself of their allies, they detected a daring and restless energy which, if serviceable now, might easily be rendered dangerous hereafter. They even suspected the Athenians of tampering with the helots—led, it may be, to that distrust by the contrast, which they were likely to misinterpret, between their own severity and the Athenian mildness towards the servile part of their several populations, and also by the existence of a powerful party at Athens, which had opposed the assistance Cimon afforded. With their usual tranquil and wary policy, the Spartan government attempted to conceal their real fears, and simply alleging they had no farther need of their assistance, dismissed the Athenians. But that people, constitutionally irritable, perceiving that, despite this hollow pretext, the other allies, including the obnoxious Æginetans, were retained, received their dismissal as an insult. Thinking, justly, that they had merited a nobler confidence from the Spartans, they gave way to their first resentment, and disregarding the league existing yet between themselves and Sparta, against the Mede—the form of which had survived the spirit—they entered into an alliance with the Argives, hereditary enemies of Sparta, and in that alliance the Aleuads of Thessaly were included.

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* Plut. in vit. Cim.

XV. The obtaining of these decrees by the popular party, was the prelude to the fall of Cimon. The talents of that great man were far more eminent in war than peace; and despite his real or affected liberality of demeanour, he wanted either the faculty to suit the time, or the art to conceal his deficiencies. Raised to eminence by Spartan favour, he had ever too boldly and too imprudently espoused the Spartan cause. At first, when the Athenians obtained their naval ascendency—and it was necessary to conciliate Sparta—the partiality with which Cimon was regarded by that state was his recommendation; now when, no longer to be conciliated, Sparta was to be dreaded and opposed, it became his ruin. It had long been his custom to laud the Spartans at the expense of the Athenians, and to hold out their manners as an example to the admiration of his countrymen. It was a favourite mode of reproof with him—"The Spartans would not have done this." It was even remembered against him that he had called his son Lacedæmonius. These predilections had of late rankled in the popular mind; and now, when the Athenian force had been contumeliously dismissed, it was impossible to forget that Cimon had obtained the decree of the relief, and that the mortification which resulted from it was the effect of his counsels.

Public spirit ran high against the Spartans, and at the head of the Spartan faction in Athens stood Cimon.

XVI. But at this time, other events, still more intimately connected with Athenian politics, conspired to weaken the authority of this able general. Those constitutional reforms, which are in reality revolutions under a milder name, were now sweeping away the last wrecks of whatever of the old aristocratic system was still left to the Athenian commonwealth.

We have seen that the democratic party had increased in power by the decree of Aristides, which opened all offices to all ranks. This, as yet, was productive less of actual than of moral effects. The liberal opinions possessed by a part of the aristocracy, and the legitimate influence which in all countries belongs to property and high descent—(greatest indeed where the countries are most free)—secured, as a general rule, the principal situations in the state to rank and wealth. But the *moral* effect of the decree was to elevate the lower classes with a sense of their own power and dignity, and every victory achieved over a foreign foe, gave new authority to the people, whose voices elected the leader—whose right arms won the battle.

The constitution, previous to Solon, was an oligarchy of birth. Solon rendered it an aristocracy of property. Clisthenes widened its basis from property to population;—as we have already seen, it was, in all probability, Clisthenes also who weakened the more illicit and oppressive influences of wealth, by establishing the ballot or secret suffrage, instead of the open voting, which was common in the time of Solon. It is the necessary constitution of society, that when one class obtains power, the ancient checks to that power require remodelling. The Areopagus was designed by Solon as the aristocratic balance to the popular assembly. But in all states in which the people and the aristocracy are represented, the great blow to the aristocratic senate is given, less by altering its own constitution than by infusing new elements of democracy into the popular assembly. The old boundaries are swept away, not by the levelling of the bank, but by the swelling of the torrent. The checks upon democracy ought to be so far concealed, as to be placed in the representation of the democracy itself;—for checks upon its progress from *without* are but as fortresses to be stormed: and what, when latent, was the influence of a friend, when apparent, is the resistance of a foe.

The Areopagus, the constitutional bulwark of the aristocratic party of Athens, became more and more invidious to the people. And now, when Cimon resisted every innovation on that assembly, he only ensured his own destruction, while he expedited the policy he denounced. Ephialtes directed all the force of the popular opinion against this venerable senate; and, at length, though not openly assisted by Pericles,* who took no

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* Those historians who presume upon the slovenly sentences of Plutarch, that Pericles made "*an instrument*" of Ephialtes in assaults on the Areopagus, seem strangely to mistake both the character of Pericles, which was dictatorial,

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prominent part in the contention, that influential statesman succeeded in crippling its functions and limiting its authority.

XVII. I do not propose to plunge the reader into the voluminous and unprofitable controversy on the exact nature of the innovations of Ephialtes, which has agitated the students of Germany. It appears to me most probable that the Areopagus retained the right of adjudging cases of homicide,* and little beside of its ancient

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not crafty, and the position of Ephialtes, who at that time was the leader of his party, and far more influential than Pericles himself. Plato (ap. Plut. in vit. Peric.) rightly considers Ephialtes the true overthrower of the Areopagus, and although Pericles assisted him, (Aristot. l. ii. c. 9,) it was against Ephialtes as the *chief*, not "the instrument," that the wrath of the aristocracy was directed.

* See Demosth. adv. Aristocr. p. 642, ed. Reisk. Herman ap. Heidelb. Jahrb. 1830, No. 44. Forckhammer de Areopago, &c. against Boeckh.—I cannot agree with those who attach so much importance to Æschylus, in the tragedy of "The Furies," as an authority in favour of the opinion, that the innovations of Ephialtes deprived the Areopagus of jurisdiction in cases of homicide. It is true that the play turns upon the origin of the Tribunal—it is true that it celebrates its immemorial right of adjudication of murder, and that Minerva declares this court of judges shall remain for ever. But would this prophecy be risked at the very time when this court was about to be abolished? In the same speech of Minerva, far more direct allusion is

constitutional authority, that it lost altogether its most dangerous power in the *indefinite police* it had formerly exercised over the habits and morals of the people, that any control of the finances was wisely transferred to the popular senate,* that its irresponsible character was abolished, and it was henceforth rendered accountable to the people. Such alterations were not made without exciting the deep indignation of the aristocratic faction.

In all state reforms a great and comprehensive mind does not so much consider whether each reform is just, as what will be the ultimate ascendency given to particular principles. Cimon preferred to all constitutions a limited aristocracy, and his practical experience regarded every measure in its general tendency towards or against the system which he honestly advocated.

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made to the police of the court in the fear and reverence due to it; and strong exhortations follow, not to venerate anarchy or tyranny, or banish "all fear from the city," which apply much more forcibly to the council than to the court of the Areopagus.

* That the Areopagus did, prior to the decree of Ephialtes, possess a power over the finances, appears from a passage in Aristotle, (ap. Plut. in vit. Them.) in which it is said, that, in the expedition to Salamis, the Areopagus awarded to each man eight drachmæ.

XVIII. The struggle between the contending parties and principles had commenced before Cimon's expedition to Ithomë; the mortification connected with that event, in weakening Cimon, weakened the aristocracy itself. Still his fall was not immediate,* nor did it take place as a single and isolated event, but as one of the necessary consequences of the great political change effected by Ephialtes. All circumstances, however, conspired to place the son of Miltiades in a situation which justified the suspicion and jealousy of the Athenians. Of all the enemies, how powerful soever, that Athens could provoke, none were so dangerous as Lacedæmon.

Dark, wily, and implacable, the rugged Queen of the Peloponnesus reared her youth in no other accomplishments than those of stratagem and slaughter. Her enmity against Athens was no longer smothered. Athens had everything to fear, not less from her influence than her armies. It was not, indeed, so much from the unsheathed sword as from the secret councils of Sparta, that danger was to be apprehended. It cannot be too often remembered, that amongst a great portion of the Athenian aristocracy, the Spartan government maintained a considerable and sympathetic intelligence. That government ever sought to adapt and mould all popular constitutions to her own oligarchic model; and where she could not openly invade, she secretly sought to undermine, the liberties of her neighbours. Thus, in addition to all fear from an enemy in the field, the Athenian democracy were constantly excited to suspicion against a spy within the city: always struggling with an aristocratic party, which aimed at regaining the power it had lost, there was just reason to apprehend that that party would seize any occasion to encroach upon the popular institutions; every feud with Sparta consequently seemed to the Athenian people, nor without cause, to subject to intrigue and conspiracy their civil freedom; and (as always happens with foreign interference, whether latent or avowed) exasperated whatever jealousies already existed against those for whose political interests the interference was exerted. Bearing this in mind, we shall see no cause to wonder at the vehement opposition to which Cimon was now subjected. We are driven ourselves to search deeply into the causes which led to his prosecution, as to that of other eminent men in Athens, from want of clear and precise historical details. Plutarch, to whom, in this instance, we are compelled chiefly to resort, is a most equivocal authority. Like most biographers, his care is to exalt his hero, though at the expense of that hero's countrymen ; and though an amiable writer, nor without some semi-philosophical views in morals, his mind was singularly deficient in grasp and in comprehension. He never penetrates the subtle causes of effects. He surveys the past, sometimes as a scholar, sometimes as a tale-teller, sometimes even as a poet, but never as a statesman. Thus, we learn from him little of the true reasons for the ostracism, either of Aristides, of Themistocles, or of Cimon—points now intricate, but which might then, alas ! have been easily cleared up by a profound inquirer, to the acquittal alike of themselves and of their judges. To the natural deficiencies of Plutarch we must add his party predilections. He was opposed to democratic opinions,—and that objection, slight in itself, or it might be urged against many of the best historians and the wisest thinkers, is rendered weighty in that he was unable to see, that in all human constitutions perfection is impossible, that we must take the evil with the good, and that what he imputes to one form of government, is equally attributable to another. For in what monarchy, what oli-

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* Plutarch attributes his ostracism to the resentment of the Athenians on his return from Ithomë; but this is erroneous. He was not ostracised till two years after his return.

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garchy, have not great men been misunderstood, and great merits exposed to envy?

Thus, in the life of Cimon, Plutarch says that it was "on a slight pretext"* that that leader of the Spartan party in Athens was subjected to the ostracism. We have seen enough to convince us that, whatever the pretext, the reasons, at least, were grave and solid—that they were nothing short of Cimon's unvarying ardour for, and constant association with, the principles and the government of that state most inimical to Athens, and the suspicious policy of which was, in all times—at that time especially—fraught with danger to her power, her peace, and her institutions. Could we penetrate farther into the politics of the period, we might justify the Athenians yet more. Without calling into question the integrity and the patriotism of Cimon, without supposing that he would have entered into any intrigue against the Athenian independence of foreign powers—a supposition his subsequent conduct effectually refutes—he might, as a sincere and warm partisan of the nobles, and a resolute opposer of the popular party, have sought to restore at home the aristocratic balance of power, by whatever means his great rank and influence and connexion with the Lacedæmonian party, could afford him. We are told, at least, that he not only opposed all the advances of the more liberal party—that he not only stood resolutely by the interests and dignities of the Areopagus, which had ceased to harmonise with the more modern institutions, but that he expressly sought to *restore* certain prerogatives which that assembly had formally lost during his foreign expeditions, and that he earnestly endeavoured to bring back the whole constitution to the more aristocratic government established by Clisthenes. It is one thing to preserve, it is another to restore. A people may be deluded, under popular pretexts, out of the rights they have newly acquired, but they never submit to be openly despoiled of them. Nor can we call that ingratitude which is but the refusal to surrender to the merits of an individual the acquisitions of a nation.

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* Μικρᾶς ἐπιλαβόμενοι προφάσεως.—Plut. in Vit. Cim. 17.

All things considered, then, I believe, that if ever ostracism was justifiable, it was so in the case of Cimon—nay, it was perhaps absolutely essential to the preservation of the constitution. His very honesty made him resolute in his attempts against that constitution. His talents, his rank, his fame, his services, only rendered those attempts more dangerous.

XIX. Could the reader be induced to view, with an examination equally dispassionate, the several ostracisms of Aristides and Themistocles, he might see equal causes of justification, both in the motives and in the results. The first was absolutely necessary for the defeat of the aristocratic party, and the removal of restrictions on those energies which instantly found the most glorious vents for action; the second was justified by a similar necessity, that produced similar effects. To impartial eyes a people may be vindicated without traducing those whom a people are driven to oppose. In such august and complicated trials the accuser and defendant may be both innocent.

CHAPTER IV.

WAR BETWEEN MEGARA AND CORINTH—MEGARA AND PEGÆ GARRISONED BY ATHENIANS—REVIEW OF AFFAIRS AT THE PERSIAN COURT—ACCESSION OF ARTAXERXES—REVOLT OF EGYPT UNDER INARUS—ATHENIAN EXPEDITION TO ASSIST INARUS—ÆGINA BESIEGED—THE CORINTHIANS DEFEATED—SPARTAN CONSPIRACY WITH THE ATHENIAN OLIGARCHY—BATTLE OF TANAGRA—CAMPAIGN AND SUCCESSES OF MYRONIDES—PLOT OF THE OLIGARCHY AGAINST THE REPUBLIC—RECAL OF CIMON—LONG WALLS COMPLETED—ÆGINA REDUCED—EXPEDITION UNDER TOLMIDES—ITHOMË SURRENDERS—THE INSURGENTS ARE SETTLED AT NAUPACTUS—DISASTROUS TERMINATION OF THE EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION—THE ATHENIANS MARCH INTO THESSALY TO RESTORE ORESTES THE TAGUS—CAMPAIGN UNDER PERICLES—TRUCE OF FIVE YEARS WITH THE PELOPONNESIANS—CIMON SETS SAIL FOR CYPRUS—PRETENDED TREATY OF PEACE WITH PERSIA—DEATH OF CIMON.

I. CIMON, summoned to the ostracism, was sentenced to its appointed term of banishment—ten years. By his removal, the situation of Pericles became suddenly more prominent and marked, and he mingled with greater confidence and boldness in public affairs. The vigour of the new administration was soon manifest. Megara had hitherto been faithful to the Lacedæmonian alliance—a dispute relative to the settlement of frontiers broke out between that state and Corinth. Although the Corinthian government, liberal and enlightened, was often opposed to the Spartan oligarchy, it was still essential to the interest of both those Peloponnesian states to maintain a firm general alliance, and to keep the Peloponnesian confederacy as a counterbalance to the restless ambition of the new head of the Ionian league. Sparta could not, therefore, have been slow in preferring the alliance of Corinth to that of Megara. On the other hand, Megara, now possessed of a democratic constitution, had long since abandoned the Dorian character and habits. The situation of its territories, the nature of its institutions, alike pointed to Athens as its legitimate ally. Thus, when the war broke out between Megara and Corinth, on the side of the latter appeared Sparta, while Megara naturally sought the assistance of Athens. The Athenian government eagerly availed itself of the occasion to increase the power which Athens was now rapidly extending over Greece. If we cast our eyes along the map of Greece, we shall perceive that the occupation of Megara proffered peculiar advantages. It became at once a strong and formidable fortress against any incursions from the

Peloponnesus, while its sea-ports of Nisæa and Pegæ, opened new fields, both of ambition and of commerce, alike on the Saronic and the gulf of Corinth. The Athenians seized willingly on the alliance thus offered to them, and the Megarians had the weakness to yield both Megara and Pegæ to Athenian garrisons, while the Athenians fortified their position by long walls that united Megara with its harbour at Nisæa.

II. A new and more vast enterprise contributed towards the stability of the government by draining off its bolder spirits, and diverting the popular attention from domestic to foreign affairs.

It is necessary to pass before us, in brief review, the vicissitudes of the Persian court. In republican Greece, the history of the people marches side by side with the biography of great men. In despotic Persia, all history dies away in the dark recesses and sanguinary murthers of a palace governed by eunuchs and defended but by slaves.

In the year 465 B. C. the reign of the unfortunate Xerxes drew to its close. On his return to Suza, after the disastrous results of the Persian invasion, he had surrendered himself to the indolent luxury of a palace. An able and daring traitor, named Artabanus,* but who seems to have been a different personage from that Artabanus whose sagacity had vainly sought to save the armies of Xerxes from the expedition to Greece, entered into a conspiracy against the feeble monarch. By the connivance of a eunuch, he penetrated at night the chamber of the king,—and the gloomy destinies of Xerxes were consummated by assassination. Artabanus sought to throw the guilt upon Darius, the eldest son of the murdered king; and Artaxerxes, the younger brother, seems to have connived at a charge which might render himself the lawful heir to the throne. Darius accordingly perished by the same fate as his father. The extreme youth of Artaxerxes had induced Artabanus to believe that but a slender and insecure life now stood between himself and the throne; but the young prince was already master of the royal art of dissimulation: he watched his opportunity,—and by a counter-revolution Artabanus was sacrificed to the manes of his victims.*

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* Neither Aristotle, (Polit. lib. v. c. 10,) nor Justin, nor Ctesias, nor Diodorus, speak of the assassin as kinsman to

B. C. 464.

Thus Artaxerxes obtained the undisturbed pos-

Xerxes. In Plutarch (Vit. Them.) he is Artabanus the Chiliarch.

* Ctesias, 30; Diod. 11; Justin, lib. iii. c. 1. According to Aristotle, Artabanus, as captain of the king's guard, received an order to make away with Darius, neglected the command, and murdered Xerxes from fears for his own safety.

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session of the Persian throne. The new monarch appears to have derived from nature a stronger intellect than his father. But the abuses, so rapid and rank of growth in eastern despotisms, which now ate away the strength of the Persian monarchy, were already, perhaps, past the possibility of reform. The enormous extent of the ill-regulated empire tempted the ambition of chiefs who might have plausibly hoped, that as the Persian masters had now degenerated to the effeminacy of the Assyrians they had supplanted, so the enterprise of a second Cyrus might be crowned by a similar success.

Egypt had been rather overrun by Xerxes, than subdued,—and the spirit of its ancient people waited only the occasion of revolt. A Libyan prince, of the name of Inarus, whose territories bordered Egypt, entered that country, and was hailed by the greater part of the population as a deliverer. The recent murder of Xerxes—the weakness of a new reign, commenced in so sanguinary a manner, appeared to favour their desire of independence; and the African adventurer beheld himself at the head of a considerable force. Having already secured foreign subsidiaries, Inarus was anxious yet more to strengthen himself abroad; and more than one ambassador was despatched to Athens, soliciting her assistance, and proffering, in return, a share in the

B. C. 460.

government for whose establishment her arms were solicited :—a singular fatality, that the petty colony which, if we believe tradition, had so many centuries ago settled in the then obscure corners of Attica, should now be chosen, the main auxiliary of the parent state in her vital struggles for national independence.

III. In acceding to the propositions of Inarus, Pericles yielded to considerations wholly contrary to his after policy, which made it a principal object to confine the energies of Athens within the limits of Greece. It is probable that that penetrating and scientific statesman (if, indeed, he had yet attained to a position which enabled him to follow out his own conceptions) saw that every new government must dazzle either by great enterprises abroad, or great changes at home,—and that he preferred the former. There are few sacrifices that a wary minister, newly-established, from whom high hopes are entertained, and who can justify the destruction of a rival party only by the splendour of its successor,—will not hazard rather than incur the contempt which follows disappointment. He will do something that is dangerous rather than do nothing that is brilliant.

Neither the hatred nor the fear of Persia was at an end in Athens; and to carry war into the heart of her empire was a proposition eagerly hailed. The more democratic and turbulent portion of the populace, viz. the seamen, had already been disposed of in an expedition of two hundred triremes against Cyprus. But the distant and magnificent enterprise of Egypt—the hope of new empire—the lust of undiscovered treasures—were more alluring than the reduction of Cyprus. That island was abandoned, and the fleet, composed both of Athenian and confederate ships, sailed up the Nile. Masters of that river, the Athenians advanced to Memphis, the capital of Lower Egypt. They stormed and took two of the divisions of that city ;—the third, called the White Castle, (occupied by the Medes, the Persians, and such of the Egyptians as had not joined the revolt,) resisted their assault.

IV. While thus occupied in Egypt, the Athenian arms were equally employed in Greece. The whole forces of the commonwealth were in demand—war on every side. The alliance with Megara not only created an enemy in Corinth ; but the Peloponnesian confederacy became involved with the Attic : Lacedæmon herself, yet inert, but menacing ; while the neighbouring Ægina, intent and jealous, prepared for hostilities soon manifest.

The Athenians forestalled the attack—made a descent on Haliæ, in Argolis—were met by the

Corinthians and Epidaurians, and the result of battle was the victory of the latter. This defeat the Athenians speedily retrieved at sea. Off Cecryphalea, in the Saronic gulf, they attacked and utterly routed the Peloponnesian fleet. And now Ægina openly declared war and joined the hostile league. An important battle was fought by these two maritime powers with the confederates of either side. The Athenians were victorious—took seventy ships—and pushing the advantage they had obtained, landed in Ægina, and besieged her city. Three hundred heavy-armed Peloponnesians were despatched to the relief of Ægina ; while the Corinthians invaded the Megarian territory, seized the passes of Geranea, and advanced to Megara with their allies. Never was occasion more propitious. So large a force in Egypt, so large a force at Ægina,—how was it possible for the Athenians to march to the aid of Megara? They appeared limited to the choice either to abandon Megara, or to raise the siege of Ægina :—so reasoned the Peloponnesians. But the advantage of a constitution widely popular, is that the whole community become soldiers in time of need. Myronides, an Athenian of great military genius, not unassisted by Pericles, whose splendid qualities now daily developed themselves, was well adapted to give direction to the enthusiasm of the people.

Not a man was called from Ægina. The whole regular force disposed of, there yet remained at Athens those too aged and those too young for the ordinary service. Under Myronides, boys and old men marched at once to the assistance of their Megarian ally. A battle ensued; both sides retiring, neither considered itself defeated. But the Corinthians retreating to Corinth, the Athenians erected a trophy on the field. The Corinthian government received its troops with reproaches, and after an interval of twelve days, the latter returned to the scene of contest, and asserting their claim to the victory, erected a trophy of their own. During the work the Athenians sallied from Megara, where they had ensconced themselves, attacked and put to flight the Corinthians; and a considerable portion of the enemy turning into ground belonging to a private individual, became entangled in a large pit or ditch, from which was but one outlet, viz. that by which they had entered. At this passage the Athenians stationed their heavy-armed troops, while the light-armed soldiers surrounded the ditch, and with the missiles of darts and stones put the enemy to death. The rest (being the greater part) of the Corinthian forces effected a safe but dishonourable retreat.

V. This victory effected, and Megara secured, —although Ægina still held out, and although the fate of the Egyptian expedition was still unknown,--the wonderful activity of the government commenced, what even in times of tranquillity would have been a great and arduous achievement. To unite their city with its seaports, they set to work at the erection of the Long Walls, which extended from Athens both to Phalerus and Piræus. Under Cimon, preparations already had been made for the undertaking, and the spoils of Persia now provided the means for the defence of Athens.

Meanwhile, the Spartans still continued at the siege of Ithomë. We must not imagine that all the Helots had joined in the revolt. This, indeed, would be almost to suppose the utter disorganisation of the Spartan state. The most luxurious subjects of a despotism were never more utterly impotent in procuring for themselves the necessaries of life, than were the hardy and abstemious freemen of the Dorian Sparta. It was dishonour for a Spartan to till the land—to exercise a trade. He had all the prejudices against any *calling* but that of arms, which characterised a noble of the middle ages.

As is ever the case in the rebellion of slaves, the rise was not universal; a sufficient number of these wretched dependents remained passive and inert to satisfy the ordinary wants of their masters, and to assist in the rebuilding of the town. Still the Spartans were greatly enfeebled, crippled, and embarrassed by the loss of the rest: and the siege of Ithomë sufficed to absorb their attention, and to make them regard without open hostilities, if with secret enmity, the operations of the Athenians. The Spartan alliance formally dissolved—Megara, with its command of the Peloponnesus seized—the Doric city of Corinth humbled and defeated—Ægina blockaded;—all these—the Athenian proceedings—the Spartans bore without any formal declaration of war.

VI. And now, in the eighth year of the Messenian war, piety succeeded, where pride and revenge had failed, and the Spartans permitted other objects to divide their attention with the siege of Ithomë. It was one of the finest characteristics of that singular people, their veneration for antiquity. For the little, rocky, and obscure territory of Doris, whence tradition derived their origin, they felt the affection and reverence of sons. A quarrel arising between the people of this state and the neighbouring Phocians, the latter invaded Doris, and captured one of its three towns.* The Lacedæmonians marched at once to the assistance of their reputed fatherland, with an army of no less than fifteen hundred heavy-armed Spartans, and ten thousand of their Peloponnesian allies,* under the command of Nicomedes, son of Cleombrotus, and guardian of their king Pleistoanax, still a minor. They forced the Phocians to abandon the town they had taken; and having effectually protected Doris by a treaty of peace between the two nations, prepared to return home. But in this they were much perplexed;—the pass of Geranea was now occupied by the Athenians: Megara, too, and Pegæ were in their hands. Should they pass by sea through the Gulf of Crissa, an Athenian squadron already occupied that passage. Either way they were intercepted.† Under all circumstances, they resolved to halt awhile in Bœotia, and watch an opportunity to effect their return. But with these ostensible motives for that sojourn, assigned by Thucydides, there was another more deep and latent. We have had constant occasion to remark how singularly it was the Spartan policy to plot against the constitution of free states, and how well-founded was the Athenian jealousy of the secret interference of the Grecian Venice.

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* Thucyd. lib. i. 107. The three towns of Doris were, according to Thucydides, Bæum, Cytenium, and Erineus.—The Scholiast on Pindar (Pyth. i. 121) speaks of six towns.

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* Thucyd. lib. i.

† Thucydides, in mentioning these operations of the Athenians, and the consequent fears of the Spartans, proves to what a length hostilities had gone, though war was not openly declared.

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Halting now in Bœotia, Nicomedes entered into a clandestine communication with certain of the oligarchic party in Athens, the object of the latter being the overthrow of the existent popular constitution. With this object was certainly linked the recal of Cimon; though there is no reason to believe that great general a party in the treason. This conspiracy was one main reason of the halt in Bœotia. Another was, probably, the conception of a great and politic design, glanced at only by historians, but which, if successful, would have ranked amongst the masterpieces of Spartan statesmanship. This design was—while Athens was to be weakened by internal divisions, and her national spirit effectually curbed by the creation of an oligarchy, the tool of Sparta—to erect a new rival to Athens in the Bœotian Thebes. It is true that this project was not, according to Diodorus, openly apparent until after the battle of Tanagra. But such a scheme required preparation; and the sojourn of Nicomedes in Bœotia afforded him the occasion to foresee its possibility and prepare his plans. Since the Persian invasion, Thebes had lost her importance, not only throughout Greece, but throughout Bœotia, her dependent territory. Many of the states refused to regard her as their capital: and the Theban government desired to regain its power. Promises to make war upon Athens rendered the Theban power auxiliary to Sparta: the more Thebes was strengthened, the more Athens was endangered: and Sparta, ever averse to quitting the Peloponnesus, would thus erect a barrier to the Athenian arms on the very frontiers of Attica.

VII. While such were the designs and schemes of Nicomedes, the conspiracy of the aristocratic party could not be so secret in Athens, but what some rumour, some suspicion, broke abroad. The people became alarmed and incensed. They resolved to anticipate the war; and, judging Nicomedes cut off from retreat, and embarrassed and confined in his position, they marched against him with a thousand Argives, with a band of Thessalian horse, and some other allied troops drawn principally from Ionia, which, united to the whole force of the armed population within their walls, amounted, in all, to fourteen thousand men.

VIII. It is recorded by Plutarch, that during their march Cimon appeared, and sought permission to join the army. This was refused by the Senate of Five Hundred, to whom the petition was referred, not from any injurious suspicion of Cimon, but from a natural fear that his presence, instead of inspiring confidence, would create confusion ; and that it might be plausibly represented that he sought less to resist the Spartans than to introduce them into Athens—a proof how strong was the impression against him, and how extensive had been the Spartan intrigues. Cimon retired, beseeching his friends to vindicate themselves from the aspersions cast upon them. Placing the armour of Cimon—a species of holy standard—in their ranks, a hundred of the warmest supporters amongst his tribe, advanced to battle conscious of the trust committed to their charge.

B. C. 457. IX. In the territory of Tanagra a severe engagement took place. On that day Pericles himself fought in the thickest part of the battle ; exposing himself to every danger, as if anxious that the loss of Cimon should not be missed. The battle was long, obstinate, and even : when in the midst of it, the Thessalian cavalry suddenly deserted to the Spartans. Despite this treachery the Athenians, well supported by the Argives, long maintained their ground with advantage. But when night separated the armies,* victory remained with the Spartans and their allies.†

The Athenians were not, however, much disheartened by defeat, nor did the Spartans profit by their advantage. Anxious only for escape, Nicomedes conducted his forces homeward, passed through Megara, destroying the fruit-trees on his march; and, gaining the pass of Geranea, which the Athenians had deserted to join the camp at Tanagra, arrived at Lacedæmon.

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* Diod. Sic. lib. xi.

† Thucyd lib. i.

Meanwhile the Thebans took advantage of the victory to extend their authority, agreeably to the project conceived with Sparta. Thebes now attempted the reduction of all the cities of Bœotia. Some submitted—others opposed.

X. Aware of the necessity of immediate measures against a neighbour, brave, persevering, and ambitious, the Athenian government lost no time in recruiting its broken forces. Under Myronides, an army, collected from the allies and dependent states, was convened to assemble upon a certain day. Many failed the appointment, and the general was urged to delay his march till their arrival. "It is not the part of a general," said Myronides sternly, "to await the pleasure of his soldiers! By delay I read an omen of the desire of the loiterers to avoid the enemy. Better rely upon a few faithful, than on many disaffected."

With a force comparatively small, Myronides

B.C. 456.

commenced his march, entered Bœotia sixty-two days only after the battle of Tanagra, and engaging the Bœotians at Œnophyta, obtained a complete and splendid victory. This battle, though Diodorus could find no details of the action, was reckoned by Athens among the most glorious she had ever achieved; preferred by the vain Greeks even to those of Marathon and Platæa, inasmuch as Greek was opposed to Greek, and not to the Barbarians. Those who fell on the Athenian side were first honoured by public burial in the Ceramicus—"As men," says Plato, "who fought against Grecians for the liberties of Greece." Myronides followed up his victory by levelling the walls of Tanagra. All Bœotia except Thebes herself was brought into the Athenian alliance—as democracies in the different towns, replacing the oligarchical governments, gave the moral blow to the Spartan ascendency. Thus, in effect, the consequences of the battle almost deserved the eulogies bestowed upon the victory. Those consequences were to revolutionize nearly all the states in Bœotia; and, by calling up a democracy in each state, Athens at once changed enemies into allies.

From Bœotia, Myronides marched to Phocis, and, pursuing the same policy, rooted out the oligarchies, and established popular governments. The Locrians of Opus gave a hundred of their wealthiest citizens as hostages. Returned to Athens, Myronides was received with public rejoicings,* and thus closed a short but brilliant campaign, which had not only conquered enemies, but had established everywhere garrisons of friends.

XI. Although the banishment of Cimon had appeared to complete the triumph of the popular party in Athens, his opinions were not banished also. Athens, like all free states, was ever agitated by the feud of parties, at once its danger and its strength. Parties in Athens were, however, utterly unlike many of those that rent the peace of the Italian republics; nor are they rightly understood in the vague declamations of Barthelemi or Mitford; they were not only parties of names and men,—they were also parties of principles—the parties of restriction and of advance. And thus the triumph of either was invariably followed by the triumph of the principle it espoused. Nobler than the bloody contests of mere faction, we do not see in Athens the long and sweeping proscriptions, the atrocious massacres that attended the party-strifes of ancient Rome, or of modern Italy. The ostracism, or the fine, of some obnoxious and eminent partizans, usually contented the wrath of the victorious politicians. And in the advance of a cause the people found the main vent for their passions. I trust, however, that I shall not be accused of prejudice when I state as a fact, that the popular party in Athens seems to have been much more moderate and less unprincipled even in its excesses than its antagonists. We never see it, like the Pisistratidæ, leagued with the Persian, nor with Isagoras, betraying Athens to the Spartan. What the oligarchic faction did when triumphant, we see hereafter in the establishment of the Thirty Tyrants. And compared with their offences, the ostracism of Aristides, or the fine and banishment of Cimon, lose all their colours of wrong.

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* Diod. lib. xi.

XII. The discontented advocates for an oligarchy, who had intrigued with Nicomedes, had been foiled in their object, partly by the conduct of Cimon in disavowing all connexion with them, partly by the retreat of Nicomedes himself. Still their spirit was too fierce to suffer them to forego their schemes without a struggle, and after the battle of Tanagra they broke out into open conspiracy against the republic.

The details of this treason are lost to us; it is one of the darkest passages of Athenian history.

From scattered and solitary references we can learn, however, that for a time it threatened the democracy with ruin.* The victory of the Spartans at Tanagra gave strength to the Spartan party in Athens; it also inspired with fear many of the people; it was evidently desirable rather to effect a peace with Sparta than to hazard a war. Who so likely to effect that peace as the banished Cimon? Now was the time to press for his recal. Either at this period, or shortly afterwards, Ephialtes, his most vehement enemy, was barbarously murdered—according to Aristotle, a victim to the hatred of the nobles.

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* Certain German historians, Müller among others, have built enormous conclusions upon the smallest data, when they suppose Cimon was implicated in this conspiracy. Meirs, (Historia Juris de bonis Damnatis, p. 4. note 11,) is singularly unsuccessful in connecting the supposed fine of fifty talents incurred by Cimon, with the civil commotions of this period. In fact, that Cimon was ever fined at all is very improbable; the supposition rests upon most equivocal ground; if adopted, it is more likely, perhaps, that the fine was inflicted after his return from Thasos, when he was accused of neglecting the honour of the Athenian arms, and being seduced by Macedonian gold, (a charge precisely of a nature for which a fine would have been incurred.) But the whole tale of this imaginary fine, founded upon a sentence in Demosthenes, who, like many orators, was by no means minutely accurate in historical facts, is possibly nothing more than a confused repetition of the old story of the fine of fifty talents (the same amount) imposed upon Miltiades, and really paid by Cimon. This is doubly, and, indeed, indisputably, clear, if we accept Bekker's reading of *Παρίων* for *πάτριον* in the sentence of Demosthenes referred to.

XIII. Pericles had always conducted his opposition to Cimon with great dexterity and art; and indeed the aristocratic leaders of contending parties are rarely so hostile to each other as their subordinate followers suppose. In the present strife for the recal of his rival, amidst all the intrigues and conspiracies, the open violence and the secret machination, which threatened not only the duration of the government, but the very existence of the republic, Pericles met the danger by proposing himself the repeal of Cimon's sentence.

Plutarch, with a childish sentimentality common to him when he means to be singularly effective, bursts into an exclamation upon the generosity of this step, and the candour and moderation of those times, when resentments could be so easily laid aside. But the profound and passionless mind of Pericles was above all the weaknesses of a melo-dramatic generosity. And it cannot be doubted that this measure was a compromise between the government and the more moderate and virtuous of the aristocratic party. Perhaps it was the most advantageous compromise Pericles was enabled to effect; for by concession with respect to individuals, we can often prevent concession as to things. The recal* of the great leader of the anti-popular faction may have been deemed equivalent to the surrender of many popular rights. And had we a deeper insight into the intrigues of that day, and the details of the oligarchic conspiracy, I suspect we should find that by recalling Cimon, Pericles saved the constitution.†

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* If we can attach any credit to the Oration on Peace ascribed to Andocides, Cimon was residing on his patrimonial estates in the Chersonese at the time of his recal. As Athens retained its right to the sovereignty of this colony, and as it was a most important position as respected the recent Athenian conquests under Cimon himself, the assertion, if true, will show that Cimon's ostracism was attended with no undue persecution. Had the government seriously suspected him of any guilty connivance with the oligarchic conspirators, it could scarcely have permitted him to remain in a colony, the localities of which were peculiarly favourable to any treasonable designs he might have formed.

† In the recal of Cimon, Plutarch tells us, some historians asserted that it was arranged between the two parties that the administration of the state should be divided; that Cimon should be invested with the foreign command of Cyprus, and Pericles remain the head of the domestic government. But it was not until the sixth year after his recal, (viz. in the archonship of Euthydemus, see Diodorus xii.) that Cimon went to Cyprus; and before that event, Pericles himself was absent on foreign expeditions.

XIV. The first and most popular benefit anticipated from the recal of the son of Miltiades in a reconciliation between Sparta and Athens, was not immediately realized, further than by an armistice of four months.*

Long walls completed B.C. 456.

About this time the long walls of the Piræus were completed, and shortly afterwards Ægina yielded to the arms of the Athenians, upon terms which subjected the citizens of that gallant and adventurous isle (whose achievements and commerce seem no less a miracle than the greatness of Athens when we survey the limits of their narrow and rocky domain) to the rival they had long so fearlessly, nor fruitlessly, braved. The Æginetans surrendered their shipping, demolished their walls, and consented to the payment of an annual tribute. And so was fulfilled the proverbial command of Pericles, that Ægina ought not to remain the eye-sore of Athens.

Ægina yields B.C. 455.

XV. Ægina reduced, the Athenian fleet of fifty gallies manned by four thousand men,† under the command of Tolmides, circumnavigated the Peloponnesus,—the armistice of four months had expired,—and, landing in Laconia, Tolmides burnt Gythium, a dock of the Lacedæmonians; took Chalcis, a town belonging to Corinth, and debarking at Sicyon, engaged and defeated the Sicyonians. Thence proceeding to Cephallenia, he mastered the cities of that isle; and descending at Naupactus, on the Corinthian gulf, wrested it from the Ozolian Locrians.

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* Plutarch, by a confusion of dates, blends this short armistice with the five years truce, some time afterwards concluded. Mitford and others have followed him in his error. That the recal of Cimon was followed by no peace, not only with the Spartans, but the Peloponnesians generally, is evident from the incursions of Tolmides presently to be related.

† Diod. lib. xi.

B.C. 455.

In the same year with this expedition, and in the tenth year of the siege, Ithomë surrendered to Lacedæmon. The long and gallant resistance of that town, the precipitous site of which nature herself had fortified, is one of the most memorable and glorious events in the Grecian history; and we cannot but regret that the imperfect morality of those days, which saw glory in the valour of freemen, rebellion only in that of slaves, should have left us but frigid and scanty accounts of so obstinate a siege. To posterity neither the cause nor the achievements of Marathon or Platæa, seem the one more holy, the other more heroic, than this long defiance of Messenians and Helots against the prowess of Sparta, and the aid of her allies. The reader will rejoice to learn that it was on no dishonourable terms that the city at last surrendered. Life

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and free permission to depart was granted to the besieged, and recorded by a pillar erected on the banks of the Alpheus.* But such of the Helots as had been taken in battle, or in the neighbouring territory, were again reduced to slavery—the ringleaders so apprehended, alone executed.†

The gallant defenders of Ithomë having conditioned to quit for ever the Peloponnesus, Tolmides invested them with the possession of his new conquest of Naupactus. There, under a democratic government, protected by the power of Athens, they regained their ancient freedom, and preserved their hereditary name of Messenians—long distinguished from their neighbours by their peculiar dialect.

XVI. While thus, near at home, the Athenians had extended their conquests, and cemented their power, the adventurers they had despatched to the Nile were maintaining their strange settlement with more obstinacy than success. At first, the Athenians, and their ally, the Lybian Inarus, had indeed, as we have seen, obtained no inconsiderable advantage.

Anxious to detach the Athenians from the

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* See Müller's Dorians, and the authorities he quotes. Vol. i. B. 1.

† For so I interpret Diodorus.

Egyptian revolt, Artaxerxes had despatched an ambassador to Sparta, in order to prevail upon that state to make an excursion into Attica, and so compel the Athenians to withdraw their troops from Egypt. The liability of the Spartan government to corrupt temptation was not unknown to a court which had received the Spartan fugitives; and the ambassador was charged with large treasures to bribe those whom he could not otherwise convince. Nevertheless, the negotiation failed; the government could not be induced to the alliance with the Persian king. There was indeed a certain spirit of honour inherent in that haughty nation which, if not incompatible with cunning and intrigue, held at least in profound disdain, an alliance with the Barbarian, for whatsoever ends. But, in fact, the Spartans were then entirely absorbed in the reduction of Ithomë, and the war in Arcady; and it would, farther, have been the height of impolicy in that state, if meditating any designs against Athens, to assist in the recal of an army which it was its very interest to maintain employed in distant and perilous expeditions.

The ambassador had the satisfaction indeed of wasting some of his money, but to no purpose; and he returned without success to Asia. Artaxerxes then saw the necessity of arousing himself to those active exertions which the feebleness of an exhausted despotism rendered the final, not the first, resort. Under Megabyzus an immense army was collected, traversing Syria and Phœnicia, it arrived in Egypt, engaged the Egyptian forces in a pitched battle, and obtained a complete victory. Thence marching to Memphis, it drove the Greeks from their siege of the White Castle, till then continued, and shut them up in Prosopitis, an island in the Nile, around which their ships lay anchored. Megabyzus ordered the channel to be drained by dykes, and the vessels, the main force of the Athenians, were left stranded. Terrified by this dexterous manœuvre, as well as by the success of the Persians, the Egyptians renounced all further resistance; and the Athenians were deprived at once of their vessels and their allies.*

XVII. Nothing daunted, and inspired by their disdain no less than by their valour, the Athenians were yet to the Barbarian what the Norman knights were afterwards to the Greeks. They burnt their vessels that they might be as useless to the enemy as to themselves, and, exhorting each other not to dim the glory of their past exploits, shut up still in the small town of

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* Diod. Sic. lib. xi.

Byblus, situated in the isle of Prosopitis, resolved to defend themselves to the last.

The blockade endured a year and a half, such was the singular ignorance of the art of sieges in that time. At length, when the channel was drained, as I have related, the Persians marched across the dry bed, and carried the place by a land assault. So ended this wild and romantic expedition. The greater part of the Athenians perished; a few, however, either forced their way by arms, or, as Diodorus more probably relates, were permitted by treaty to retire, out of the Egyptian territory. Taking the route of Lybia, they arrived at Cyrene, and finally reached Athens.

Inarus, the author of the revolt, was betrayed, and perished on the cross, and the whole of Egypt once more succumbed to the Persian yoke, save only that portion called the marshy or fenny parts, (under the dominion of a prince named Amyrtæus,) protected by the nature of the soil and the proverbial valour of the inhabitants. Meanwhile a squadron of fifty vessels, despatched by Athens to the aid of their countrymen, entered the Mendesian mouth of the Nile too late to prevent the taking of Byblus. Here they were surprised and defeated by the Persian troops and a Phœnician fleet, and few B.C. 455.

survived a slaughter, which put the last seal on the disastrous results of the Egyptian expedition.

At home the Athenians continued, however, their military operations. Thessaly, like the rest of Greece, had long shaken off the forms of kingly government, but the spirit of monarchy still survived in a country where the few were opulent and the multitude enslaved. The Thessalian Republics, united by an assembly of deputies from the various towns, elected for their head, a species of protector—who appears to have possessed many of the characteristics of the Podesta of the Italian states. His nominal station was that of military command —a station which, in all, save the most perfect, constitutions, comprehends also civil authority. The name of Tagus was given to this dangerous chief, and his power and attributes so nearly resembled those of a monarch, that even Thucydides confers on a Tagus the title of king. Orestes, one of these princes, had been driven from his country by a civil revolution. He fled to Athens and besought her assistance to effect his restoration. That the Athenians should exert themselves in favour of a man whose rank so nearly resembled the odious dignity of a monarch, appears a little extraordinary. But as the Tagus was often the favourite of the commonalty, and the foe of the aristocratic party, it is possible that in restoring Orestes, the Athenians might have seen a new occasion to further the policy so triumphantly adopted in Bœotia and Phocis,—to expel a hostile oligarchy and establish a friendly democracy.* Whatever their views, they decided to yield to the exile the assistance he demanded, and under Myronides an army in the following year accompanied Orestes into Thessaly. They were aided by the Bœotians and Phocians. Myronides marched to Pharsalus, a Thessalian city, and mastered the surrounding country; but the obstinate resistance of the city promising a more protracted blockade than it was deemed advisable to await, the Athenians raised the siege without effecting the object of the expedition.

XVIII. The possession of Pegæ and the new colony of Naupactus,† induced the desire of extending the Athenian conquests on the neighbouring coasts, and the government were naturally anxious to repair the military honours of Athens—lessened in Egypt, and certainly not increased in Thessaly. With a thousand Athenian soldiers, Pericles himself set out for Pegæ.

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* There was a democratic party in Thessaly always favourable to Athens. See Thucyd. iv. c. 88.

† Now Lepanto.

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Thence the fleet, there anchored, made a descent on Sicyon; Pericles defeated the Sicyonians in a pitched battle, and besieged the city; but after some fruitless assaults, learning that the Spartans were coming to the relief of the besieged, he quitted the city, and, reinforced by some Achæans, sailed to the opposite side of the continent, crossed over the Corinthian Bay, besieged the town of Œniadæ, in Acarnania, (the inhabitants of which Pausanias* styles the hereditary enemies of the Athenians,) ravaged the neighbouring country, and bore away no inconsiderable spoils. Although he reduced no city, the successes of Pericles were signal enough to render the campaign triumphant;† and it gratified the national pride and resentment to have insulted the cities and wasted the lands of the Peloponnesus.

B C. 454.

These successes were sufficient to render a peace with Sparta and her allies advisable for the latter, while they were not sufficiently decided to tempt the Athenians to prolong irregular and fruitless hostilities. Three years were consumed without further aggressions on either side, and probably in negotiations for peace. At the end of that time, the influence and intervention of Cimon obtained a truce of five years between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians.

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* Paus. lib. ii. c. 25.

† Plut. in vit. Peric.

B.C. 450.

XIX. The truce with the Peloponnesians removed the main obstacle to those more bright and extensive prospects of enterprise and ambition which the defeat of the Persians had opened to the Athenians. In that restless and unpausing energy, which is the characteristic of an intellectual republic, there seems, as it were, a kind of destiny: a power impossible to resist urges the state from action to action, from progress to progress, with a rapidity dangerous while it dazzles; resembling in this the career of individuals impelled, onward, first to attain, and thence to preserve, power, and who cannot struggle against the fate which necessitates them to soar, until, by the moral gravitation of human things, the point which has *no beyond* is attained; and the next effort to rise is but the prelude of their fall. In such states Time, indeed, moves with gigantic strides; years concentrate what would be the epochs of centuries in the march of less popular institutions. The planet of their fortunes rolls with an equal speed through the cycle of internal civilisation as of foreign glory. The condition of their brilliant life is the absence of repose. The accelerated circulation of the blood beautifies but consumes, and action itself, exhausting the stores of youth by its very vigour, becomes a mortal but divine disease.

XX. When Athens rose to the ascendency of Greece, it was necessary to the preservation of that sudden and splendid dignity, that she should sustain the naval renown by which it had been mainly acquired. There is but one way to *sustain* reputation, viz., to *increase* it: and the memory of past glories becomes dim unless it be constantly refreshed by new. It must also be borne in mind that the maritime habits of the people had called a new class into existence in the councils of the state. The seamen, the most democratic part of the population, were now to be conciliated and consulted; it was requisite to keep them in action, for they were turbulent—in employment, for they were poor: and thus the domestic policy and the foreign interests of Athens alike conspired to necessitate the prosecution of maritime enterprise.

XXI. No longer harassed and impeded by fears of an enemy in the Peloponnesus, the lively imagination of the people readily turned to more dazzling and profitable warfare. The island of Cyprus had (we have seen) before attracted the ambition of the mistress of the Ægæan.

Its possession was highly advantageous, whether for military or commercial designs, and once subjected, the fleet of the Athenians might readily retain the dominion. Divided into nine petty states, governed not by republican but monarchical institutions, the forces of the island were distracted, and the whole proffered an easy as well as glorious conquest ; while the attempt took the plausible shape of deliverance, inasmuch as Persia, despite the former successes of Cimon, still arrogated the supremacy over the island, and the war was in fact less against Cyprus than against Persia. Cimon, who ever affected great and brilliant enterprises, and whose main policy it was to keep the Athenians from the dangerous borders of the Peloponnesus, hastened to cement the truce he had formed with the states of that district, by directing the spirit of enterprise to the conquest of Cyprus.

B.C. 450.

Invested with the command of two hundred gallies, he set sail for that island.* But designs more vast were associated with this enterprise. The objects of the late Egyptian expedition still tempted, and sixty vessels of the fleet were despatched to Egypt to the assistance of Amyrtæus, who, yet unconquered, in the marshy regions, sustained the revolt against the Persian king.

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* Thucyd. lib. i. 112.

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV.

Artabazus commanded the Persian forces, and with a fleet of three hundred vessels, he ranged himself in sight of Cyprus. Cimon, however, landing on the island, succeeded in capturing many of its principal towns. Humbled and defeated, it was not the policy of Persia to continue hostilities with an enemy from whom it had so much to fear, and so little to gain. It is not, therefore, altogether an improbable account of the later authorities, that ambassadors with proposals of peace were formally despatched to Athens. But we must reject as a pure fable the assertions that a treaty was finally agreed upon, by which it was decreed, on the one hand, that the independence of the Asiatic Greek towns should be acknowledged, and that the Persian generals should not advance within three days' march of the Grecian seas; nor should a Persian vessel sail within the limit of Phaselis and the Cyanean rocks; while, on the other hand, the Athenians were bound not to enter the territories of Artaxerxes.* No such arrangement was known to Thucydides; no reference is ever made to such a treaty in subsequent transactions with Persia.

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* Diod. lib. xi. Plut. in vit. Cim. Heeren. Manual of Ancient History; but Mr. Mitford and Mr. Thirlwall properly reject this spurious treaty.

BOOK IV. CHAP. IV.

A document, professing to be a copy of this treaty, was long extant; but it was undoubtedly the offspring of a weak credulity, or an ingenious invention. But while negotiations, if ever actually commenced, were yet pending, Cimon was occupied in the siege of Citium, where famine conspired with the obstinacy of the besieged to protract the success of his arms. It is recorded among the popular legends of the day that Cimon * sent a secret mission to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon. "Return," was the response to the messengers; "Cimon is with me!" The messengers did return to find the son of Miltiades was no more. He expired during the blockade of Citium. By his orders his death was concealed, the siege raised, and still under the magic of Cimon's name, the Athenians engaging the Phœnicians and Cilicians off the Cyprian Salamis, obtained signal victories both by land and sea. Thence, joined by the squadron despatched to Egypt, which, if it did not share, did not retrieve, the misfortunes of the previous expedition, they returned home.

B.C. 449.

The remains of Cimon were interred in Athens, and the splendid monument consecrated to his name was visible in the time of Plutarch.

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* Plut. in Cim.

CHAPTER V.

CHANGE OF MANNERS IN ATHENS—BEGUN UNDER THE PISISTRATIDÆ—EFFECTS OF THE PERSIAN WAR, AND THE INTIMATE CONNEXION WITH IONIA—THE HETÆRÆ—THE POLITICAL EMINENCE LATELY ACQUIRED BY ATHENS—THE TRANSFER OF THE TREASURY FROM DELOS TO ATHENS—LATENT DANGERS AND EVILS—FIRST, THE ARTIFICIAL GREATNESS OF ATHENS NOT SUPPORTED BY NATURAL STRENGTH—SECONDLY, HER PERNICIOUS RELIANCE ON TRIBUTE—THIRDLY, DETERIORATION OF NATIONAL SPIRIT COMMENCED BY CIMON IN THE USE OF BRIBES AND PUBLIC TABLES—FOURTHLY, DEFECTS IN POPULAR COURTS OF LAW.—PROGRESS OF GENERAL EDUCATION—HISTORY—ITS IONIAN ORIGIN—EARLY HISTORIANS—ACUSILAUS—CADMUS—EUGEON—HELLANICUS—PHERECYDES—XANTHUS—VIEW OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF HERODOTUS—PROGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY SINCE THALES—PHILOSOPHERS OF THE IONIAN AND ELEATIC SCHOOLS—PYTHAGORAS—HIS PHILOSOPHICAL TENETS AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE—EFFECT OF THESE PHILOSOPHERS ON ATHENS—SCHOOL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY CONTINUED IN ATHENS FROM THE TIME OF SOLON—ANAXAGORAS—ARCHELAUS—PHILOSOPHY NOT A THING APART FROM THE ORDINARY LIFE OF THE ATHENIANS.

BOOK IV. CHAP. V. B.C. 449.

I. Before we pass to the administration of Pericles,—a period so brilliant in the history not more of Athens than of Art,—it may not be unseasonable to take a brief survey of the progress which the Athenians had already made in civilisation and power.

The Comedians and the Rhetoricians, when at a later period they boldly represented to the democracy, in a mixture of satire and of truth, the more displeasing features of the popular character, delighted to draw a contrast between the new times and the old. The generation of men whom Marathon and Salamis had immortalised, were, according to these praisers of the past, of nobler manners and more majestic virtues than their degenerate descendants. "Then," exclaimed Isocrates, "our young men did not waste their days in the gambling-house, nor with music-girls, nor in the assemblies, in which whole days are now consumed . . . . . . then did they shun the Agora, or if they passed through its haunts, it was with modest and timorous forbearance — then, to contradict an elder was a greater offence than now-a-days to offend a parent—then, not even a servant of honest repute would have been seen to eat or drink within a tavern!" "In the good old times," says the citizen of Aristophanes,* "our youths breasted the snow without a mantle—their music was masculine and martial—their gymnastic exercises decorous and chaste. Thus were trained the heroes of Marathon!"

In such happy days we are informed that mendicancy and even want were unknown.†

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* The Clouds.

† Isoc. Areop. 38.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that we must accept these comparisons between one age and another with considerable caution and qualification. We are too much accustomed to such declamations in our own time not to recognise an ordinary trick of satirists and declaimers. As long as a people can bear patiently to hear their own errors and follies scornfully proclaimed, they have not become altogether degenerate or corrupt. Yet still, making every allowance for rhetorical or poetic exaggeration, it is not more evident than natural that the luxury of civilisation—the fervour of unbridled competition, in pleasure as in toil—were attended with many changes of manners and life favourable to art and intellect, but hostile to the stern hardihood of a former age.

II. But the change was commenced, not under a democracy but under a tyranny—it was consummated not by the vices but the virtues of the nation. It began with the Pisistratidæ,* who first introduced into Athens the desires of pleasure and the habits of ostentation, that refine before they enervate;—and that luxury, which, as in Athenæus it is well and profoundly said, is often the concomitant of freedom, "as soft couches took their name from Hercules"—made its rapid progress with the result of the Persian war.

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* Idomen. ap. Athen. lib. xii.

The plunder of Platæa, the luxuries of Byzantium, were not limited in their effect to the wild Pausanias. The decay of old and the rise of new families tended to give a stimulus to the emulation of wealth—since it is by wealth that new families seek to eclipse the old. And even the destruction of private houses, in the ravages of Mardonius, served to quicken the career of art. In rebuilding their mansions the nobles naturally availed themselves of the treasures and the appliances of the gorgeous enemy they had vanquished and despoiled. Few ever rebuild their houses on as plain a scale as the old ones. In the city itself the residences of the great remained plain and simple; they were mostly built of plaster and unburnt brick, and we are told that the houses of Cimon and Pericles were scarcely distinguishable from those of the other citizens. But in their villas in Attica, in which the Athenians took a passionate delight, they exhibited their taste and displayed their wealth.* And the lucrative victories of Cimon, backed by his own example of ostentation, gave to a vast number of families, hitherto obscure, at once the power to gratify luxury and the desire to parade refinement. Nor was the Eastern example more productive of emulation than the Ionian. The Persian war, and the league which followed it, brought Athens into the closest intercourse with her graceful but voluptuous colonies. Miletus fell, but the manners of Miletus survived her liberties. That city was renowned for the peculiar grace and intellectual influence of its women; and it is evident that there must have been a gradual change of domestic habits and the formation of a new class of female society in Athens before Aspasia could have summoned around her the power and the wisdom and the wit of Athens, —before an accomplished mistress could have been even suspected of urging the politic Pericles into war—and, above all, before an Athenian audience could have assented in delight to that mighty innovation on their masculine drama —which is visible in the passionate heroines and the sentimental pathos of Euripides.

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* Thucyd. lib. ii. 16; Isoc. Areopag. c xx. p. 234.

But this change was probably not apparent in the Athenian matrons themselves, who remained for the most part in primitive seclusion; and though, I think, it will be shown hereafter that modern writers have greatly exaggerated both the want of mental culture and the degree of domestic confinement to which the Athenian women were subjected,* yet it is certain, at least, that they did not share the social freedom nor partake the intellectual accomplishments of their lords. It was the new class of "Female Friends" or "*Hetæræ*," a phrase ill translated by the term of "courtezans," (from whom they were indubitably, but not to our notions very intelligibly, distinguished,) that exhibited the rarest union of female blandishment and masculine culture. "The wife for our house and honour," implies Demosthenes, "the Hetæra for our solace and delight." These extraordinary women, all foreigners, and mostly Ionian, made the main phenomenon of Athenian society. They were the only women with whom an enlightened Greek could converse as equal to himself in education. While the law denied them civil rights, usage lavished upon them at once admiration and respect. By stealth, as it were, and in defiance of legislation, they introduced into the ambitious and restless circles of Athens many of the effects, pernicious or beneficial, which result from the influence of edu-

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* If we believe with Plutarch that wives accompanied their husbands to the house of Aspasia, (and it was certainly

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a popular charge against Pericles that Aspasia served to corrupt the Athenian matrons,) they could not have been so jealously confined as writers, judging from passages in the Greek writers that describe not what women *were*, but what women *ought to be*, desire us to imagine. And it may be also observed, that the popular anecdotes represent Elpinice as a female intriguante, busying herself in politics and mediating between Cimon and Pericles;—anecdotes, whether or not they be strictly faithful, that at least tend to illustrate the state of society.

cated women upon the manners and pursuits of men.*

III. The alteration of social habits was not then sudden and startling, (such is never the case in the progress of national manners,) but, commencing with the graces of a polished tyranny, ripened with the results of glorious but too profitable victories. Perhaps the time in which the state of transition was most favourably visible was just prior to the death of Cimon. It was not then so much the over-refinement of a new and feebler generation, as the polish and elegance which wealth, art, and emulation, necessarily imparted to the same brave warriors who exchanged posts with the Spartans at Platæa, and sent out their children and old men to fight and to conquer with Myronides.

IV. A rapid glance over the events of the few years commemorated in the last book of this history, will suffice to show the eminence which Athens had attained over the other states of Greece. She was the head of the Ionian League —the mistress of the Grecian seas; with Sparta, the sole rival that could cope with her armies and arrest her ambition, she had obtained a peace; Corinth was humbled—Ægina ruined—Megara had shrunk into her dependency and garrison. The states of Bœotia had received their very constitution from the hands of an Athenian general—the democracies planted by Athens served to make liberty itself subservient to her will, and involved in her safety. She had remedied the sterility of her own soil by securing the rich pastures of the neighbouring Eubœa. She had added the gold of Thasos to the silver of Laurion, and established a footing in Thessaly which was at once a fortress against the Asiatic arms and a mart for Asiatic commerce. The fairest lands of the opposite coast—the most powerful islands of the Grecian seas—contributed to her treasury, or were almost legally subjected to her revenge. Her navy was rapidly increasing in skill, in number, and renown; at home the recal of Cimon had conciliated domestic contentions, and the death of Cimon dispirited for awhile the foes to the established constitution. In all Greece, Myronides was perhaps the ablest general—Pericles (now rapidly rising to the sole administration of affairs,*) was undoubtedly the most highly educated, cautious, and commanding statesman.

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* As I propose, in a subsequent part of this work, to enter at considerable length into the social life and habits of the Athenians, I shall have full opportunity for a more detailed account of these singular heroines of Alciphron and the later comedians.

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* It was about five years after the death of Cimon that Pericles obtained that supreme power which resembled a tyranny, but was only the expression and concentration of the democratic will.

But a single act of successful daring had more than all else contributed to the Athenian power. Even in the lifetime of Aristides it had been proposed to transfer the common treasury from Delos to Athens.* The motion failed—perhaps through the virtuous opposition of Aristides himself. But when, at the siege of Ithomë, the feud between the Athenians and Spartans broke out, the fairest pretext and the most favourable occasion conspired in favour of a measure so seductive to the national ambition. Under pretence of saving the treasury from the hazard of falling a prey to the Spartan rapacity or need, it was removed at once to Athens;† and while the enfeebled power of Sparta, fully engrossed by the Messenian war, forbade all resistance to the transfer, from that, the most formidable, quarter, the conquests of Naxos and the recent reduction of Thasos, seem to have intimidated the spirit, and for a time even to have silenced the reproaches, of the tributary states themselves. Thus in actual possession of the tribute of her allies, Athens acquired a new right to its collection and its management, and while she devoted some of the treasures to

B.C. 461 or 460.

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* Theophrast. ap. Plut. in vit. Per.

† Justin. lib. iii. c. 6.

the maintenance of her strength, she began early to uphold the prerogative of appropriating a part to the enhancement of her splendour.*

BOOK IV. CHAP. V.

As this most important measure occurred at

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* For the transfer itself there were excuses yet more plausible than that assigned by Justin. First, in the year following the breach between the Spartans and Athenians, (B. C. 460,) probably the same year in which the transfer was effected, the Athenians were again at war with the great king, in Egypt; and there was therefore a show of justice in the argument noticed by Boeckh, (though in the source whence he derives it, the argument applies to the earlier time of Aristides,) that the transfer provided a place of greater security against the Barbarians. Secondly, Delos itself was already, and had long been, under Athenian influence. Pisistratus had made a purification of the island,[1] Delian soothsayers had predicted to Athens the sovereignty of the seas,[2] and the Athenians seem to have arrogated a right of interference with the temple. The transfer was probably, therefore, in appearance, little more than a transfer from a place under the power of Athens to Athens itself. Thirdly, it seems that when the question was first agitated, during the life of Aristides, it was at the desire of one of the allies themselves (the Samians.)[3]

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[1] Herod. lib. i. c. 64.

[2] Semius Delius ap. Athen. viii.

[3] Plut. in vit. Aristid. Boeckh (vol. i. 135, translation,) has no warrant for supposing that Pericles influenced the Samians in the expression of this wish,—because Plutarch refers the story to the time of Aristides, during whose life Pericles possessed no influence in public affairs.

the very period when the power of Cimon was weakened by the humiliating circumstances that attended his expedition to Ithomë, and by the vigorous and popular measures of the opposition, so there seems every reason to believe that it was principally advised and effected by Pericles, who appears shortly afterwards presiding over the administration of the finances.*

Though the Athenian commerce had greatly increased, it was still principally confined to the Thracian coasts and the Black Sea. The desire of enterprises, too vast for a state whose power reverses might suddenly destroy, was not yet indulged to excess; nor had the turbulent spirits of the Piræus yet poured in, upon the various barriers of the social state and the political constitution, the rashness of sailors and the avarice of merchants. Agriculture, to which all classes in Athens were addicted, raised a healthful counteraction to the impetus given to trade. Nor was it till some years afterwards, when Pericles gathered all the citizens into the town, and left no safety-valve to the ferment and vices of the Agora—that the Athenian aristocracy gradually lost all patriotism and manhood, and an energetic democracy was corrupted into a vehement though educated mob. The spirit of faction, it is true, ran high, but a third party, headed by Myronides and Tolmides, checked the excesses of either extreme.

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* The assertion of Diodorus, (lib. xii. 38,) that to Pericles was confided the superintendence and management of the treasure, is corroborated by the anecdotes in Plutarch and elsewhere, which represent Pericles as the principal administrator of the funds.

V. Thus, at home and abroad, time and fortune, the concurrence of events, and the happy accident of great men, not only maintained the present eminence of Athens, but promised, to ordinary foresight, a long duration of her glory and her power. To deeper observers, the picture might have presented dim, but prophetic shadows. It was clear that the command Athens had obtained was utterly disproportioned to her natural resources—that her greatness was altogether artificial, and rested partly upon moral rather than physical causes, and partly upon the fears and the weakness of her neighbours. A sterile soil, a limited territory, a scanty population—all these—the drawbacks and disadvantages of nature—the wonderful energy and confident daring of a free state might conceal in prosperity; but the first calamity could not fail to expose them to jealous and hostile eyes. The empire delegated to the Athenians, they must naturally desire to retain and to increase; and there was every reason to forebode that their ambition would soon exceed their capacities to sustain it. As the state became accustomed to its power, it would learn to abuse it. Increasing civilisation, luxury, and art, brought with them new expenses, and Athens had already been permitted to indulge with impunity the dangerous passion of exacting tribute from her neighbours. Dependence upon other resources than those of the native population has ever been a main cause of the destruction of despotisms, and it cannot fail, sooner or later, to be equally pernicious to the republics that trust to it. The resources of taxation confined to freemen and natives, are almost incalculable; the resources of tribute wrung from foreigners and dependents, are sternly limited and terribly precarious—they rot away the true spirit of industry in the people that demand the impost—they implant ineradicable hatred in the states that concede it.

VI. Two other causes of great deterioration to the national spirit were also at work in Athens. One, as I have before hinted, was the policy commenced by Cimon, of winning the populace by the bribes and exhibitions of individual wealth. The wise Pisistratus had invented penalties—Cimon offered encouragement—to idleness. When the poor are once accustomed to believe they have a right to the generosity of the rich, the first deadly inroad is made upon the energies of independence and the sanctity of property. A yet more pernicious evil in the social state of the Athenians was radical in their constitution,—it was their courts of justice. Proceeding upon a theory that must have seemed specious and plausible to an inexperienced and infant republic, Solon had laid it down as a principle of his code, that as all men were interested in the preservation of law, so all men might exert the privilege of the plaintiff and accuser. As society grew more complicated, the door was thus opened to every species of vexatious charge and frivolous litigation. The common informer became a most harassing and powerful personage, and made one of a fruitful and crowded profession: and in the very capital of liberty there existed the worst species of espionage. But justice was not thereby facilitated. The informer was regarded with universal hatred and contempt; and it is easy to perceive, from the writings of the great comic poet, that the sympathies of the Athenian audience were, as those of the English public at this day, enlisted against the man who brought the inquisition of the law to the hearth of his neighbour.

VII. Solon committed a yet more fatal and incurable error when he carried the democratic principle into judicial tribunals. He evidently considered that the very strength and life of his constitution rested in the Heliæa—a court the numbers and nature of which have been already described. Perhaps, at a time when the old oligarchy was yet so formidable, it might have been difficult to secure justice to the poorer classes, while the judges were selected from the wealthier. But justice to all classes became a yet more capricious uncertainty when a court of law resembled a popular hustings.*

If we entrust a wide political suffrage to the people, the people at least hold no trust for others than themselves and their posterity—they are not responsible to the public, for they *are* the public. But in law, where there are two parties concerned, the plaintiff and defendant, the judge should not only be incorruptible, but strictly responsible. In Athens the people became the judge; and, in offences punishable by fine, were the very party interested in procuring condemnation; the numbers of the jury prevented all responsibility, excused all abuses, and made them susceptible of the same shameless excesses that characterise self-elected corporations—from which appeal is idle, and over which public opinion exercises no controul. These numerous, ignorant, and passionate assemblies, were liable at all times to the heats of party, to the eloquence of individuals— to the whims, and caprices, the prejudices, the impatience, and the turbulence, which must ever be the characteristics of a multitude orally addressed. It was evident also that from service in such a court, the wealthy, the eminent, and the learned, with other occupation or amusement, would soon seek to absent themselves. And the final blow to the integrity and respectability of the popular judicature was given at a later period by Pericles, when he instituted a salary, just sufficient to tempt the poor and to be disdained by the affluent, to every dicast or juryman in the ten ordinary courts.* Legal science became not the profession of the erudite and the laborious few, but the livelihood of the ignorant and idle multitude. The canvassing—the cajoling—the bribery—that resulted from this, the most vicious, institution of the Athenian democracy—are but too evident and melancholy tokens of the imperfection of human wisdom. Life, property, and character, were at the hazard of a popular election. These evils must have been long in progressive operation; but perhaps they were scarcely visible till the fatal innovation of Pericles, and the flagrant excesses that ensued, allowed the people themselves to listen to the branding and terrible satire upon the popular judicature, which is still preserved to us in the comedy of Aristophanes.

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* The political nature and bias of the Heliæa is apparent in the very oath, preserved in Demost. con. Tim. p. 746, ed. Reiske. In this the heliast is sworn never to vote for the establishment of tyranny or oligarchy in Athens, and never to listen to any proposition tending to destroy the democratic constitution. That is, a man entered upon a judicial tribunal by taking a political oath !

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* These courts have been likened to modern juries; but they were very little bound by the forms and precedents which shackle the latter. What a jury, even now-a-days, a jury of only twelve persons, would be if left entirely to impulse

At the same time, certain critics and historians have widely and grossly erred in supposing that these courts of "the sovereign multitude" were partial to the poor and hostile to the rich. All testimony proves that the fact was lamentably the reverse. The defendant was accustomed to engage the persons of rank or influence whom he

and party feeling, any lawyer will readily conceive. How much more capricious, uncertain, and prejudiced, a jury of five hundred, and, in some instances, of one thousand or fifteen hundred![1]

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[1] By the junction of two or more divisions, as in cases of Eisangelia. Poll. viii. 53 and 123; also Tittman.

might number as his friends, to appear in court on his behalf. And property was employed to procure at the bar of justice the suffrages it could command at a political election. The greatest vice of the democratic Heliæa was, that by a fine the wealthy could purchase pardon—by interest the great could soften law. But the chances were against the poor man. To him litigation was indeed cheap, but justice dear. He had much the same inequality to struggle against in a suit with a powerful antagonist, that he would have had in contesting with him for an office in the administration. In all trials resting on the voice of popular assemblies it ever has been and ever will be found, that, *cæteris paribus*, the Aristocrat will defeat the Plebeian.

VIII. Meanwhile the progress of general education had been great and remarkable. Music,* from the earliest time, was an essential part of instruction; and it had now become so common an acquirement, that Aristotle † observes, that at the close of the Persian war there was scarcely a single free-born Athenian unacquainted with the flute. The use of this instrument was afterwards discontinued, and indeed proscribed in the education of freemen, from the notion that it was not an instrument capable of music sufficiently elevated and intellectual;* yet it was only succeeded by melodies more effeminate and luxurious. And Aristophanes enumerates the change from the old national airs and measures, among the worst symptoms of Athenian degeneracy. Besides the musician, the tutor of the gymnasium and the grammarian still made the nominal limit of scholastic instruction.† But life itself had now become a school. The passion for public intercourse and disputation, which the gardens and the Agora, and exciting events, and free institutions, and the rise of philosophy, and a serene and lovely climate, made the prevalent characteristic of the matured Athenian, began to stir within the young. And in the meanwhile the tardy invention of Prose Literature worked its natural revolution in intellectual pursuits.

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* "Designed by our ancestors," says Aristotle, (Pol. lib. viii. c. 3,) "not, as many now consider it, merely for delight, but for discipline; that so the mind might be taught not only how honourably to pursue business, but how creditably to enjoy leisure; for such enjoyment is, after all, the end of business and the boundary of active life."

† See Aristot. (Pol. lib. viii. c. 6.)

IX. It has been before observed, that in

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* An anecdote in Gellius, lib. xv. c. 17, refers the date of the disuse of this instrument to the age of Pericles and during the boyhood of Alcibiades.

† Drawing was subsequently studied as a branch of education essential to many of the common occupations of life.

Greece, as elsewhere, the first successor of the poet was the philosopher, and that the oral lecturer preceded the prose writer. With written prose HISTORY commenced. Having found a mode of transmitting that species of knowledge which could not, like rhythmical tales or sententious problems, be accurately preserved by the memory alone, it was natural that a present age should desire to record and transmit the past—κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί,—an everlasting heirloom to the future.

To a semi-barbarous nation history is little more than poetry. The subjects to which it would be naturally devoted are the legends of religion—the deeds of ancestral demigods—the triumphs of successful war. In recording these themes of national interest, the poet is the first historian. As philosophy—or rather the spirit of conjecture, which is the primitive and creative breath of philosophy—becomes prevalent, the old credulity directs the new research to the investigation of subjects which the poets have not sufficiently explained, but which, from their remote and religious antiquity, are mysteriously attractive to a reverent and inquisitive population, with whom long descent is yet the most flattering proof of superiority. Thus genealogies, and accounts of the origin of states and deities, made the first subjects of history, and inspired the Argive Acusilaus,* and, as far as we can plausibly conjecture, the Milesian Cadmus.

X. The Dorians—a people who never desired to disturb tradition, unwilling carefully to investigate, precisely because they superstitiously venerated, the Past, little inquisitive as to the manners or the chronicles of alien tribes, satisfied, in a word, with themselves, and incurious as to others—were not a race to whom history became a want. Ionia—the subtle, the innovating, the anxious, and the restless—nurse of the arts, which the mother country ultimately reared, boasts in Cadmus the Milesian the first writer of history and of prose;† Samos, the birth place of Pythagoras, produced Eugeon, placed by Dionysius at the head of the early historians; and Mitylene claimed Hellanicus, who seems to have formed a more ambitious design than his predecessors. He wrote a history of the ancient kings of the earth, and an account of the founders of the most celebrated cities in each kingdom.‡ During the early and crude attempts of these and other writers, stern events contributed to rear from tedious research and fruitless conjecture the true genius of History; for it is as a people begin to struggle for rights, to comprehend political relations, to contend with neighbours abroad, and to wrestle with obnoxious institutions at home, that they desire to secure the sanction of antiquity, to trace back to some illustrious origin the rights they demand, and to stimulate hourly exertions by a reference to departed fame. Then do mythologies, and genealogies, and geographical definitions, and the traditions that concern kings and heroes, ripen into chronicles that commemorate the convulsions or the progress of a nation.

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* Suid.

† Hecatæus was also of Miletus.

‡ Pausan. ii. c. 3; Cic. de Orat. ii. c. 53; Aulus Gellius, xv. c. 23.

During the stormy period which saw the invasion of Xerxes, when everything that could shed lustre upon the past, incited to present struggles, flourished Pherecydes. B.C. 480. He is sometimes called of Leria, which seems his birthplace—sometimes of Athens, where he resided thirty years, and to which state his history referred. Although his work was principally mythological, it opened the way to sound historical composition, inasmuch as it included references to later times—to existent struggles—the descent of Miltiades—the Scythian expedition of Da-

BOOK IV. CHAP. V. B.C. 463.

rius. Subsequently, Xanthus, a Lydian, composed a work on his own country, of which some extracts remain, and from which Herodotus did not disdain to borrow.

XI. It was nearly a century after the invention of prose, and of historical composition, and with the guides and examples of many writers, not uncelebrated in their day, before his emulation, that Herodotus first made known to the Grecian public, and, according to all probable evidence, at the Olympic games, a portion of that work which drew forth the tears of Thucydides, and furnished the imperishable model of picturesque and faithful narrative. This happened in a brilliant period of Athenian history; it was in the same year as the battle of Œnophyta, when Athens gave laws and constitutions to Bœotia, and the recal of Cimon established for herself both liberty and order. The youth of Herodotus was passed while the glory of the Persian war yet lingered over Greece, and while with the ascendancy of Athens commenced a new æra of civilisation. His genius drew the vital breath from an atmosphere of poetry. The desire of wild adventure still existed, and the romantic expedition of the Athenians into Egypt had served to strengthen the connexion between the Greeks and that imposing and interesting land. The rise of the Greek drama with Æschylus, probably contributed to give effect, colour, and vigour to the style of Herodotus. And something almost of the art of the contemporaneous Sophocles, may be traced in the easy skill of his narratives, and the magic yet tranquil energy of his descriptions.

XII. Though Dorian by ancient descent, it was at Halicarnassus, in Caria, a city of Asia Minor, that Herodotus was born; nor does his style, nor do his views, indicate that he derived from the origin of his family any of the Dorian peculiarities. His parents were distinguished alike by birth and fortune. Early in life those internal commotions, to which all the Grecian towns were subjected, and which crushed for a time the liberties of his native city, drove him from Halicarnassus: and, suffering from tyranny, he became inspired by that enthusiasm for freedom which burns throughout his immortal work. During his exile he travelled through Greece, Thrace, and Macedonia, — through Scythia, Asia, and Egypt. Thus he collected the materials of his work, which is, in fact, a book of travels narrated historically. If we do not reject the story that he read a portion of his work at the Olympian games, when Thucydides, one of his listeners, was yet a boy, and if we suppose the latter to have been about fifteen, this anecdote is calculated* to bear the date of Olym. 81, B.C. 456, when Herodotus was twenty-eight.

The chief residence of Herodotus was at Samos, until a revolution broke out in Halicarnassus. The people conspired against their tyrant Lygdamis. Herodotus repaired to his native city, took a prominent part in the conspiracy, and finally succeeded in restoring the popular government. He was not, however, long left to enjoy the liberties he had assisted to acquire for his fellow-citizens: some intrigue of the counter-party drove him a second time into exile. Repairing to Athens, he read the continuation of his history at the festival of the B.C. 446. Panathenæa. It was received with the most rapturous applause; and we are told that the people solemnly conferred upon the man who had immortalized their achievements against the Mede, the gift of ten talents. The disposition of this remarkable man, like that of all travellers, inclined to enterprise and adventure. His early wanderings, his later vicissitudes, seem to have confirmed a temperament originally restless and inquisitive. Accordingly, in his forty-first year, B.C. 443. he joined the Athenian emigrators that in the south of Italy established a colony at Thurium.

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* Fast. Hell. vol. ii.

XIII. At Thurium, Herodotus apparently passed the remainder of his life, though, whether his tomb was built there or in Athens, is a matter of dispute. These particulars of his life, not uninteresting in themselves, tend greatly to illustrate the character of his writings. Their charm consists in the earnestness of a man who describes countries as an eye-witness, and events as one accustomed to participate in them. The life, the raciness, the vigour of an adventurer and a wanderer, glow in every page. He has none of the refining disquisitions that are born of the closet. He paints history, rather than descants on it; he throws the colourings of a mind, unconsciously poetic, over all he describes. Now a soldier—now a priest—now a patriot—he is always a poet, if rarely a philosopher. He narrates like a witness, unlike Thucydides, who sums up like a judge. No writer ever made so beautiful an application of superstitions to truths. His very credulities have a philosophy of their own; and modern historians have acted unwisely in disdaining the occasional repetition even of his fables. For if his truths record the events—his fables paint the manners and the opinions of the time; and the last fill up the history, of which events are only the skeleton.

To account for his frequent use of dialogue, and his dramatic effects of narrative, we must remember the tribunal to which the work of Herodotus was subjected. Every author, unconsciously to himself, consults the tastes of those he addresses. No small coterie of scholars, no scrupulous and critical inquirers, made the ordeal Herodotus underwent. His chronicles were not dissertations to be coldly pondered over, and sceptically conned: they were read aloud at solemn festivals to listening thousands; they were to arrest the curiosity—to amuse the impatience—to stir the wonder of a lively and motley crowd. Thus the historian imbibed naturally the spirit of the tale-teller. And he was driven to embellish his history with the romantic legend—the awful superstition—the gossip anecdote—which yet characterise the stories of the popular and oral fictionist, in the bazaars of the Mussulman, or on the sea-sands of Sicily. Still it has been rightly said, that a judicious reader is not easily led astray by Herodotus in important particulars. His descriptions of localities, of manners and of customs, are singularly correct; and modern travellers can yet trace the vestiges of his fidelity. As the historian, therefore, was in some measure an orator, so his skill was to be manifest in the arts which keep alive the attention of an audience. Hence Herodotus continually aims at the picturesque; he gives us the very words of his actors, and narrates the secrets of impenetrable palaces with as much simplicity and earnestness, as if he had been placed behind the arras. That it was impossible for the wandering Halicarnassian to know what Gyges

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* A brilliant writer in the Edinburgh Review, (Mr. Macauley,) would account for the use of dialogue in Herodotus by the childish simplicity common to an early and artless age—as the boor always unconsciously resorts to the dramatic form of narration, and relates his story by a series of "Says he's" and "says I's." But does not Mr. Macauley, in common with many others, insist far too much on the artlessness of the age, and the unstudied simplicity of the writer? Though History itself was young, Art was already at its zenith. It was the age of Sophocles, Phidias, and Pericles. It was from the Athenians in their most polished period, that Herodotus received the most rapturous applause. Do not all accounts of Herodotus, as a writer, assure us that he spent the greater part of a long life in composing, polishing, and perfecting his history; and is it not more in conformity with the characteristic spirit of the times, and the masterly effects which Herodotus produces, to conclude, that what we suppose to be artlessness, was, in reality, the premeditated elaboration of art?

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said to Candaules, or Artabanus to Xerxes, has, perhaps, been too confidently asserted. Heeren reminds us, that both by Jewish and Grecian writers, there is frequent mention of the Scribes, or Secretaries, who constantly attended the person of the Persian monarch—on occasion of festivals,* of public reviews,† and even in the tumult of battle; and, with the idolatrous respect in which despotism was held, noted down the words that fell from the royal lip. The ingenious German then proceeds to show that this custom was common to all the Asiatic nations. Thus were formed the chronicles, or archives, of the Persians; and by reference to these minute and detailed documents, Herodotus was enabled to record conversations and anecdotes, and preserve to us the memoirs of a court. And though this conjecture must be received with caution, and, to many passages unconnected with Persia or the East, cannot be applied, it is sufficiently plausible, in some very important parts of the history, not to be altogether dismissed with contempt.

But it is for another reason, that I have occasionally admitted the dialogues of Herodotus, as well as the superstitious anecdotes current at the day. The truth of history consists, not only in the relation of events, but in preserving the character of the people and depicting the manners of the time. *Facts*, if too nakedly told, may be very different from *truths*, in the impression they convey; and the spirit of Grecian history is lost if we do not feel the Greeks themselves constantly before us. Thus when, as in Herodotus, the agents of events converse, every word reported may not have been spoken; but what we lose in accuracy of details we more than gain by the fidelity of the whole. We acquire a lively and accurate impression of the general character—of the thoughts and the manners and the men of the age and the land. It is so also with legends, sparingly used, and of which the nature is discernible from fact, by the most superficial gaze; we more sensibly feel that it was the Greeks who were engaged at Marathon, when we read of the dream of Hippias, or the apparition of Theseus. Finally, an historian of Greece will, almost without an effort, convey to the reader a sense of the mighty change, from an age of poëtical heroes to an age of practical statesmen, if he suffer Herodotus to be his model in the narrative of the

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* Esther iii. 12; viii. 9. Ezra vi. 1.

† Herod. vii. 100.

Persian war, and allow the more profound and less imaginative Thucydides to colour the pictures of the Peloponnesian.

XIV. The period now entered upon is also remarkable for the fertile and rapid developement of one branch of intellectual cultivation, in which the Greeks were pre-eminently illustrious. In History, Rome was the rival of Greece; in Philosophy, Rome was never more than her credulous and reverent scholar.

We have seen the dawn of Philosophy with Thales; Miletus, his birth-place, bore his immediate successors. Anaximander, his younger contemporary,* is said, with Pherecydes, to have been the first philosopher who availed himself of the invention of writing. His services have not been sufficiently appreciated — like those of most men who form the first steps in the progress between the originator and the perfector. He seems boldly to have differed from his master, Thales, in the very root of his system. He rejected the original element of water or humidity, and supposed the great primary essence and origin of creation, to be in that EVERYTHING or NOTHING which he called THE INFINITE, and which we might perhaps render as "The Chaos;"*—that of this vast element, the parts are changed—the whole immutable, and all things arise from and return unto that universal source.† He pursued his researches into physics, and attempted to account for the thunder, the lightning, and the winds. His conjectures are usually shrewd and keen; and sometimes, as in his assertion, "that the moon shone in light borrowed from the sun," may deserve a higher praise. Both Anaximander and Pherecydes concurred in the principles of their doctrines, but the latter seems to have more distinctly asserted the immortality of the soul.‡

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* About twenty-nine years younger. Fast. Hell. vol. ii. p. 7.

B.C. 548.

Anaximenes, also of Miletus, was the friend and follower of Anaximander. He seems, however, to have deserted the abstract philosophical dogmas of his tutor, and to have resumed the analogical system commenced by Thales—like that philosopher, he founded axioms upon observations, bold and acute, but partial and contracted. He maintained that air was the primitive element. In this theory he united the Zeus, or *ether*, of Pherecydes, and the *Infinite* of

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* Cic. Acad. Quæst. 4. Abbè de Canaye, Mem. de l'Acad. d'Inscrip. tom. x. &c.

† Diog. Laert. cap. 6. Cic. Acad. Quæst. 4, &c.

‡ Arist. Metap. Diog. Laert. Cic. Quæst. 4, &c.

Anaximander, for he held the Air to be God in itself, and infinite in its nature.

XV. While these wild but ingenious speculators conducted the career of that philosophy called the Ionian, to the later time of the serene and lofty spiritualism of Anaxagoras, two new schools arose, both founded by Ionians, but distinguished by separate names—the Eleatic and the Italic. The first was founded by Xenophanes of Colophon, in Elea, a town in western Italy. Migrating to an alien shore, colonisation seems to have produced in philosophy the same results which it produced in politics: it emancipated the reason from all previous prejudice and prescriptive shackles. Xenophanes was the first thinker B.C. 538. who openly assailed the popular faith. He divested the Great Deity of the human attributes which human vanity, assimilating God to man, had bestowed upon him. The Divinity of Xenophanes is that of modern philosophy—Eternal, Unalterable, and Alone: graven images cannot represent his form. His attributes are—ALL HEARING, ALL SIGHT, and ALL THOUGHT.

To the Eleatic School, founded by Xenophanes, belong Parmenides, Melissus the Samian, Zeno, and Heraclitus of Ephesus. All these were thinkers, remarkable for courage and subtlety. The main metaphysical doctrines of this school approach, in many respects, to those that have been familiar to modern speculators. Their predecessors argued, as the *basis* of their system, from experience of the outward world, and the evidence of the senses;—the Eleatic School, on the contrary, commenced their system from the reality of ideas, and *thence* argued on the reality of external objects; experience with them was but a show and an appearance; knowledge was not in things without, but in the mind;—they were the founders of Idealism. With respect to the Deity, they imagined the whole universe filled with it—God was ALL IN ALL. Such, though each philosopher varied the system in detail, were the main metaphysical dogmas of the Eleatic School. Its masters were high-wrought, subtle, and religious thinkers; but their doctrines were based upon a theory that necessarily led to paradox and mysticism; and finally conduced to the most dangerous of all the ancient sects—that of the Sophists.

We may here observe, that the spirit of poetry long continued to breathe in the forms of philosophy. Even Anaximander, and his immediate followers in the Ionic School, while writing in prose, appear, from a few fragments left to us, to have had much recourse to poetical

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expression, and often convey a dogma by an image; while, in the Eleatic School, Xenophanes and Parmenides, adopted the form itself of verse, as the medium for communicating their theories; and Zeno, perhaps from the new example of the Drama, first introduced into philosophical dispute that fashion of dialogue, which afterwards gave to the sternest and loftiest thought, the animation and life of dramatic pictures.

XVI. But even before the Eleatic School arose, the most remarkable and ambitious of all the earlier reasoners, the arch uniter of actual politics with enthusiastic reveries—the hero of a thousand legends—a demi-god in his ends, and an impostor in his means—Pythagoras, of Samos,—conceived, and partially executed, the vast design of establishing a speculative wisdom, and an occult religion, as the key-stone of political institutions.

So mysterious is everything relating to Pythagoras, so mingled with the grossest fables and the wildest superstitions, that he seems scarcely to belong to the age of History, or to the advanced and practical Ionia. The date of his birth—his very parentage, are matters of dispute and doubt. Accounts concur in considering his father not a native of Samos; and it seems a probable supposition that he was of Lemnian or Pelasgic origin. Pythagoras travelled early into Egypt and the East, and the system, most plausibly ascribed to him, betrays something of oriental mystery and priestcraft in its peculiar doctrines, and much more of those alien elements in its pervading and general spirit. The notion of uniting a state with religion is especially Eastern, and essentially anti-Hellenic. Returning to Samos, he is said to have found the able Polycrates in the tyranny of the government, and to have quitted his birth-place in disgust. If, then, he had already conceived his political designs, it is clear that they could never have been executed under a jealous and acute tyrant; for, in the first place, radical innovations are never so effectually opposed as in governments concentrated in the hands of a single man; and, secondly, the very pith and core of the system of Pythagoras consisted in the establishment of an oligarchic aristocracy—a constitution most hated and most persecuted by the Grecian tyrants. The philosopher migrated into Italy. He had already, in all probability, made himself renowned in Greece. For it was then a distinction to have travelled into Egypt, the seat of mysterious and venerated learning; and, philosophy, like other novelties, appears to have

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passed into fashion even with the multitude. Not only all the traditions respecting this extraordinary man, but the certain fact of the mighty effect, that in his single person he afterwards wrought in Italy, prove him also to have possessed that nameless art of making a personal impression upon mankind, and creating individual enthusiasm, which is necessary to those who obtain a moral command, and are the founders of sects and institutions. It is so much in conformity with the manners of the time, and the objects of Pythagoras, to believe that he diligently explored the ancient religions and political systems of Greece, from which he had long been a stranger, that we cannot reject the traditions (however disfigured with fable) that he visited Delos, and affected to receive instructions from the pious ministrants of Delphi.*

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* It must ever remain a disputable matter how far the Ionian Pythagoras was influenced by affection for Dorian policy and customs, and how far he designed to create a state upon the old Dorian model. On the one hand, it is certain that he paid especial attention to the rites and institutions most connected with the Dorian deity, Apollo—that, according to his followers, it was from that god that he derived his birth, a fiction that might be interpreted into a Dorian origin; he selected Croton as his residence, because it was under the protection of "his household god;" his doctrines are said to have been delivered in the Dorian

At Olympia, where he could not fail to be received with curiosity and distinction, the future lawgiver is said to have assumed the title of Philosopher, the first who claimed the name. For the rest, we must yield our faith to all probable accounts, both of his own earnest preparations

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dialect; and much of his educational discipline, much of his political system, bear an evident affinity to the old Cretan and Spartan institutions. But, on the other hand, it is probable that Pythagoras favoured the god of Delphi, partly from the close connexion which many of His symbols bore to the metaphysical speculations the philosopher had learned to cultivate in the schools of oriental mysticism, and partly from the fact that Apollo was the patron of the Medical Art, in which Pythagoras was an eminent professor. And in studying the institutions of Crete and Sparta, he might rather have designed to strengthen, by examples, the system he had already adopted, than have taken from those Dorian cities the primitive and guiding notions of the constitution he afterwards established: And in this Pythagoras might have resembled most reformers, not only of his own, but of all ages, who desire to go back to the earliest principles of the past, as the sources of experience to the future. In the Dorian institutions was preserved the original character of the Hellenic nation; and Pythagoras, perhaps, valued or consulted them, less because they were Dorian, than because they were ancient. It seems, however, pretty clear that in the character of his laws, he sought to conform to the spirit and mode of legislation already familiar in Italy, since Charondas and Zaleucus, who flourished before him, are ranked by Diodorus and others among his disciples.

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for his design, and of the high repute he acquired in Greece, that may tend to lessen the miracle of the success that awaited him in the cities of the west.

Pythag. B.C. 540—510.

XVII. Pythagoras arrived in Italy during the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, according to the testimony of Cicero and Aulus Gellius,* and fixed his residence in Croton, a city in the Bay of Tarentum, colonised by Greeks of the Achæan tribe.† If we may lend a partial credit to the extravagant fables of later disciples, endeavouring to extract from florid superaddition some original germ of simple truth, it would seem, that he first appeared in the character of a teacher of youth;‡ and, as was not unusual in those times, soon rose from the preceptor to the legislator. Dissensions in the city favoured his objects. The senate, (consisting of a thousand members, doubtless of a different race from the body of the people; the first the posterity of the settlers, the last the native population,) availed itself of the arrival and influence of an eloquent and renowned philosopher. He lent himself to the consolidation of aristocracies, and was equally inimical to democracy and tyranny. But his policy was that of no vulgar ambition; he refused, at least for a time, ostensible power and office, and was contented with instituting an organised and formidable society—not wholly dissimilar to that mighty order, founded by Loyola, in times comparatively recent. The disciples admitted into this society underwent examination and probation; it was through degrees that they passed into its higher honours, and were admitted into its deeper secrets. Religion made the basis of the fraternity—but religion connected with human ends of advancement and power. He selected the three hundred, who, at Croton, formed his order, from the noblest families, and they were professedly reared to know themselves, that so they might be fitted to command the world. It was not long before this society, of which Pythagoras was the head, appears to have supplanted the ancient senate, and obtained the legislative administration. In this institution, Pythagoras stands alone—no other founder of Greek philosophy resembles him. By all accounts, he also differed from the other sages of his time, in his estimate of the importance of women. He is said to have lectured to, and taught, them. His wife was herself a philosopher, and fifteen disciples of the softer sex rank among the prominent ornaments of his school. An order based upon so profound a knowledge of all that can fascinate or cheat mankind, could not fail to secure a temporary power. His influence was unbounded in Croton — it extended to other Italian cities—it amended, or overturned political constitutions; and had Pythagoras possessed a more coarse and personal ambition, he might, perhaps, have founded a mighty dynasty, and enriched our social annals with the results of a new experiment. But his was the ambition, not of a hero, but a sage. He wished rather to establish a system than to exalt himself; his immediate followers saw not all the consequences that might be derived from the fraternity he founded: and the political designs of his gorgeous and august philosophy, only for a while successful, left behind them but the mummeries of an impotent freemasonry, and the enthusiastic ceremonies of half-witted ascetics.

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* Livy dates it in the reign of Servius Tullus.

† Strabo.

‡ Iamblichus, c. viii. ix. See also Plato de Repub., lib. x.

XVIII. It was when this power, so mystic and so revolutionary, had, by the means of branch societies, established itself throughout a considerable portion of Italy, that a general feeling of alarm and suspicion broke out against the sage and his sectarians. The anti-Pythagorean risings, according to Porphyry, were sufficiently numerous and active to be remembered for long generations afterwards. Many of the sage's friends are said to have perished, and it is doubtful whether Pythagoras himself fell a victim to the rage of his enemies, or died, a fugitive, amongst his disciples at Metapontum. Nor was it until nearly the whole of Lower Italy was torn by convulsions, and Greece herself drawn into the contest, as pacificator and arbiter, that the ferment was allayed:—the Pythagorean institutions were abolished, and the timocratic democracies* of the Achæans rose upon the ruins of those intellectual but ungenial oligarchies.

XIX. Pythagoras committed a fatal error when, in his attempt to revolutionise society, he had recourse to aristocracies for his agents. Revolutions, especially those influenced by religion, can never be worked out but by popular emotions. It was from this error of judgment that he enlisted the people against him—for, by the account of Neanthes, related by Porphyry,† and

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[*] That the Achæan governments were democracies appears sufficiently evident; nor is this at variance with the remark of Xenophon, that timocracies were "according to the laws of the Achæans;" since timocracies were but modified democracies.

[†] The Pythagoreans assembled at the house of Milo, the wrestler, who was an eminent general and the most illustri-

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indeed from all other testimony, it is clearly evident that to popular, not party, commotion his fall must be ascribed. It is no less clear that after his death, while his philosophical sect remained, his political code crumbled away. The only seeds sown by philosophers, which spring up into Great States, are those that, whether for good or evil, are planted in the hearts of the Many.

XX. The purely intellectual additions made by Pythagoras to hùman wisdom seem to have been vast and permanent. By probable testimony, he added largely to mathematical science; and his discoveries in arithmetic, astronomy, music, and geometry, constitute an era in the History of the Mind. His metaphysical and moral speculations are not to be separated from the additions or corruptions of his disciples. But we must, at least, suppose, that Pythagoras established the main proposition, of the occult properties of NUMBERS, which were held to be the principles of all things. According to this theory, unity is the abstract principle of all perfection, and the ten elementary numbers contain

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ous of the disciples, were stoned to death, the house being fired. Lapidation was essentially the capital punishment of mobs—the mode of inflicting death that invariably stamps the offender as an enemy to the populace.

the elements of the perfect system of nature. By numbers the origin and the substance of all things could be explained.[*] Numbers make the mystery of earth and heaven—of the gods themselves. And this part of his system, which long continued to fool mankind, was a sort of monstrous junction between arithmetic and magic—the most certain of sciences with the most fantastic of chimeras. The Pythagoreans supposed the sun, or central fire, to be the seat of Jupiter and the principle of life. The stars were divine. Men, and even animals, were held to have within them a portion of the celestial nature. The soul, emanating from the celestial fire,[†] can combine with any form of matter, and is compelled to pass through various bodies. Adopting the Egyptian doctrine of transmigration, the Pythagoreans coupled it with the notion of future punishment or reward.

Much of the doctrinal morality of Pythagoras is admirable; but it is vitiated by the ceremonial quackery connected with it. Humanity to all things—gentleness—friendship—love—and, above all the rest, SELF-COMMAND—form the principal recommendations of his mild and patriarchal ethics. But, perhaps, from his desire to establish a political fraternity—perhaps from his doubt of the capacity of mankind to embrace Truth unadorned, enamoured only of her own beauty—these doctrines were united with an austere and frivolous ascetism. And virtue was but to be attained by graduating through the secret and rigid ceremonies of academical imposture. His disciples soon pushed the dogmas of their master into an extravagance at once dangerous and grotesque; and what the sage designed but for symbols of a truth were cultivated to the prejudice of the truth itself. The influence of Pythagoras became corrupt and pernicious in proportion as the original tenets became more and more adulterated or obscure, and served, in succeeding ages, to invest with the sanctity of a great name the most visionary chimeras and the most mischievous wanderings of perverted speculation. But, looking to the man himself—his discoveries—his designs—his genius—his marvellous accomplishments,—we cannot but consider him as one of the most astonishing persons the world ever produced; and, if in part a mountebank and an impostor, no one, perhaps, ever deluded others with motives more pure—from an ambition more disinterested and benevolent.

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[*] Arist. Metaph. i. 3.

[†] Diog. Laert. viii. 28.

XXI. Upon the Athenians the effect of these various philosophers was already marked and influential. From the time of Solon there had existed in Athens a kind of school of political philosophy.* But it was not a school of refining dogmas or systematic ethics; it was too much connected with daily and practical life, to foster to any great extent the abstract contemplations and recondite theories of metaphysical discoverers. Mnesiphilus, the most eminent of these immediate successors of Solon, was the instructor of Themistocles, the very antipodes of rhetoricians and refiners. But now a new age of philosophy was at hand. Already the Eleatic sages, Zeno and Parmenides, had travelled to Athens, and there proclaimed their doctrines, and Zeno numbered amongst his listeners and disciples the youthful Pericles. But a far more sensible influence was exercised by Anaxagoras of the Ionian school. For thirty years, viz. from B.C. 480 to B.C. 450, during that eventful and stirring period intervening between the battle of Thermopylæ and the commencement of the five years' truce with Sparta, followed by the death of Cimon, (B.C. 449,) this eminent and most

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* Plut. in vit. Them. The Sophists were not, therefore, as is commonly asserted, the first who brought philosophy to bear upon politics.

BOOK IV. CHAP. V.

accomplished reasoner resided in Athens.* His doctrines were those most cherished by Pericles, who ranked the philosopher amongst his intimate friends. After an absence of some years, he again returned to Athens; and we shall then find him subjected to a prosecution in which religious prejudice was stimulated by party feud. More addicted to physics than to metaphysical research, he alarmed the national superstition by explaining on physical principles the formation even of the celestial bodies. According to him, the sun itself—that centre of divine perfection with the Pythagoreans—was ejected from the earth and heated into fire by rapid motion. He maintained that the proper study of man was the contemplation of nature and the heavens:† and he refined the Author of the universe into an intellectual principle, (Νους,) which went to the root of the material causes mostly favoured by his predecessors and contemporaries. He admitted the existence of matter, but INTELLIGENCE was the animating and pervading principle, creating symmetry from chaos, imposing limit and law on all things, and inspiring life, and sensation, and perception. His predecessors in the Ionian school, who left the universe full of gods, had not openly attacked the popular mythology. But the assertion of One Intelligence, and the reduction of all else to material and physical causes, could not but have breathed a spirit wholly inimical to the numerous and active deities of Hellenic worship. Party feeling against his friend and patron Pericles, ultimately drew the general suspicion into a focus; and Anaxagoras was compelled to quit Athens, and passed the remainder of his days at Lampsacus. But his influence survived his exile. His pupil, Archelaus, was the first *native Athenian* who taught philosophy at Athens, and B.C. 450. from him we date the foundation of those brilliant and imperishable schools which secured to Athens an intellectual empire long after her political independence had died away. Archelaus himself, (as was the usual custom of the earlier sages,) departed widely from the tenets of his master. He supposed that two discordant principles, fire and water, had, by their operation, drawn all things from chaos into order, and his metaphysics were those of unalloyed materialism. At this period, too, or a little later, began slowly to arise in Athens the sect of the Sophists, concerning whom so much has been written, and so little is known. But as the effects of their lessons were not for some time widely apparent, it will be more in the order of this history to defer to a later era an examination of the doctrines of that perverted but not wholly pernicious school.

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* See, for evidence of the great gifts and real philosophy of Anaxagoras, Brucker de Sect. Ion. xix.

† Arist. Eth. Eu. i. 5.

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* Archelaus began to teach during the *interval* between the first and second visit of Anaxagoras. See Fast. Hell. vol. ii. B.C. 450.

XXII. Enough has been now said to convey to the reader a general notion of the prodigious rise which, in the most serene of intellectual departments, had been made in Greece, from the appearance of Solon to the lectures of Archelaus, who was the master of Socrates. With the Athenians philosophy was not a thing apart from the occupations of life and the events of history—it was not the monopoly of a few studious minds, but was cultivated as a fashion by the young and the well-born, the statesman, the poet, the man of pleasure, the votary of ambition.* It was inseparably interwoven with their manners, their pursuits, their glory, their decay. The history of Athens includes in itself the history of the human mind. Science and art—erudition and genius—all conspired—no less than the trophies of Miltiades, the ambition of Alcibiades—the jealousy of Sparta—to the causes of the Rise and Fall of Athens. And even that satire on themselves, to which, in the immortal lampoons of Aristophanes, the Athenian populace listened, exhibits a people whom, whatever their errors, the world never can see again —with whom philosophy was a pastime—with whom the Agora itself was an Academe— whose coarsest exhibitions of buffoonery and caricature sparkle with a wit, or expand into a poetry, which attest the cultivation of the audience no less than the genius of the author ;—a people, in a word, whom the Stagirite unconsciously individualised when he laid down a general proposition, which nowhere else can be received as a truism,—that the common people are the most exquisite judges of whatever in art is graceful, harmonious, or sublime.

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* See the evidence of this in the Clouds of Aristophanes.

END OF BOOK IV.

ATHENS:

ITS RISE AND FALL.

BOOK V.

FROM THE DEATH OF CIMON, B.C. 449, TO THE DEATH OF PERICLES, IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, B.C. 429.

ATHENS:

ITS RISE AND FALL.

BOOK V.

FROM THE DEATH OF CIMON, B.C. 449, TO THE DEATH OF PERICLES, IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR, B.C. 429.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

THUCYDIDES CHOSEN BY THE ARISTOCRATIC PARTY TO OPPOSE PERICLES—HIS POLICY—MUNIFICENCE OF PERICLES—SACRED WAR—BATTLE OF CORONEA—REVOLT OF EUBŒA AND MEGARA—INVASION AND RETREAT OF THE PELOPONNESIANS—REDUCTION OF EUBŒA—PUNISHMENT OF HISTLÆA—A THIRTY YEARS' TRUCE CONCLUDED WITH THE PELOPONNESIANS—OSTRACISM OF THUCYDIDES.

BOOK V. CHAP. I.

B.C. 449.

I. On the death of Cimon the aristocratic party in Athens felt that the position of their antagonists and the temper of the times required a leader of abilities widely distinct from those which had characterised the son of Miltiades. Instead of a skilful and enterprising general, often absent from the city on dazzling but distant expeditions, it was necessary to raise up a chief who could contend for their enfeebled and disputed privileges at home, and meet the formidable Pericles, with no unequal advantages of civil experience and oratorical talent, in the

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lists of the popular assembly, or in the stratagems of political intrigue. Accordingly their choice fell neither on Myronides nor Tolmides, but on one who, though not highly celebrated for military exploits, was deemed superior to Cimon, whether as a practical statesman, or a popular orator. Thucydides, their new champion, united with his natural gifts whatever advantage might result from the memory of Cimon; and his connexion with that distinguished warrior, to whom he was brother-in-law, served to keep together the various partisans of the faction, and retain to the eupatrids something of the respect and enthusiasm which the services of Cimon could not fail to command, even amongst the democracy. The policy embraced by Thucydides was perhaps the best which the state of affairs would permit; but it was one which was fraught with much danger. Hitherto the eupatrids and the people, though ever in dispute, had not been absolutely and totally divided; the struggles of either faction being headed by nobles, scarcely permitted to the democracy the perilous advantage of the cry—that the people were on one side, and the nobles on the other. But Thucydides, seeking to render his party as strong, as compact, and as united as possible, brought the main bulk of the eupatrids to act together in one body. The means by which he pursued and attained this object are not very clearly narrated; but it was probably by the formation of a political club—a species of social combination which afterwards became very common to all classes in Athens. The first effect of this policy favoured the aristocracy, and the energy and union they displayed restored for awhile the equilibrium of parties; but the aristocratic influence, thus made clear and open, and brought into avowed hostility with the popular cause, the city was rent in two, and the community were plainly invited to regard the nobles as their foes.* Pericles thus, more and more thrown upon the democracy, became identified with their interests, and he sought, no less by taste than policy, to prove to the populace that they had grown up into a wealthy and splendid nation, that could dispense with the bounty, the shows, and the exhibitions of individual nobles. He lavished the superfluous treasures of the state upon public festivals, stately processions, and theatrical pageants. As if desirous of elevating the commons to be themselves a nobility, all by which he appealed to their favour served to refine their taste and to inspire the meanest Athenian with a sense of the Athenian grandeur. It was said by his enemies, and the old tale has been credulously repeated, that his own private fortune not allowing him to vie with the wealthy nobles whom he opposed, it was to supply his deficiencies from the public stock that he directed some part of the national wealth to the encouragement of the national arts, and the display of the national magnificence. But it is more than probable that it was rather from principle than personal ambition that Pericles desired to discountenance and eclipse the interested bribes to public favour with which Cimon and others had sought to corrupt the populace. Nor was Pericles without the means or the spirit to devote his private fortune to proper objects of generosity. "It was his wealth and his prudence," says Plutarch, when, blaming the improvidence of Anaxagoras, "that enabled him to relieve the distressed." What he spent in charity he might perhaps have spent more profitably in display, had he not conceived that charity was the province of the citizen, magnificence the privilege of the state. It was in perfect consonance with the philosophy that now began to spread throughout Greece, and with which the mind of this great political artist was so deeply embued, to consider that the Graces ennobled the city they adorned, and that the glory of a state was intimately connected with the polish of the people.

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* Plut. in vit. Per.

II. While, at home, the divisions of the state were progressing to that point in which the struggle between the opposing leaders must finally terminate in the ordeal of the ostracism—abroad, new causes of hostility broke out between the Athenians and the Spartans. The sacred city of Delphi formed a part of the Phocian nation; but, from a remote period, its citizens appear to have exercised the independent right of managing the affairs of the temple,* and to have elected their own superintendents of the oracle and the treasures. In Delphi yet lingered the trace of the Dorian institutions, and the Dorian blood, but the primitive valour and hardy virtues of the ancestral tribe had long since mouldered away. The promiscuous intercourse of strangers, the contaminating influence of unrelaxing imposture and priestcraft—above all, the wealth of the city,

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* See Thucyd. lib. v. c. 18, in which the articles of peace state that the temple and fane of Delphi should be independent, and that the citizens should settle their own taxes, receive their own revenues, and manage their own affairs as a sovereign nation, (ἀυτοτελεῖς καὶ ἀυτοδίκους,[1]) according *to the ancient laws* of their country.

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[1] Consult on these words Arnold's Thucydides, vol. ii. p. 256, note 4.

from which the natives drew subsistence, and even luxury, without labour,* contributed to enfeeble and corrupt the national character. Unable to defend themselves by their own exertions against any enemy, the Delphians relied on the passive protection afforded by the superstitious reverence of their neighbours, or on the firm alliance that existed between themselves and the great Spartan representatives of their common Dorian race. The Athenian government could not but deem it desirable to wrest from the Delphians the charge over the oracle and the temple, since that charge might at any time be rendered subservient to the Spartan cause; and accordingly they appear to have connived at a bold attempt of the Phocians, who were now their allies. These hardier neighbours of the Sacred City claimed and forcibly seized the right of superintendence of the temple. The Spartans, alarmed and aroused, despatched an armed force to Delphi, and restored their former privileges to the citizens. They piously gave to their excursion the name of the Sacred War. Delphi formally renounced the Phocian league, declared itself an independent state, and even defined the boundaries between its own and the Phocian domains. Sparta was rewarded for its aid by the privilege of precedency in consulting the oracle, and this decree the Spartans inscribed on a brazen wolf in the sacred city. The Athenians no longer now acted through others—they recognised all the advantage of securing to their friends and wresting from their foes the management of an oracle, on whose voice depended fortune in war, and prosperity in peace. Scarce had the Spartans withdrawn, than an Athenian force, headed by Pericles, who is said to have been freed by Anaxagoras from superstitious prejudices, entered the city, and restored the temple to the Phocians. The same image which had recorded the privilege of the Spartans, now bore an inscription which awarded the right of precedency to the Athenians.—The good fortune of this expedition was soon reversed.

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* Müller's Dorians, vol. ii. p. 422. Athen. iv.

III. When the Athenians, after the battle of Œnophyta, had established in the Bœotian cities democratic forms of government, the principal members of the defeated oligarchy, either from choice or by compulsion, betook themselves to exile. These malcontents, aided, no doubt, by partisans who did not share their banishment, now seized upon Chæronea, Orchomenus, and some other Bœotian towns. The Athenians, who had valued themselves on restoring liberty to Bœotia, and, for the first time since the Persian war, had honoured with burial at the public expense those who fell under Myronides, could not regard this attempt at counter-revolution with indifference. Policy aided their love of liberty: for it must never be forgotten, that the change from democratic to oligarchic government in the Grecian states, was the formal exchange of the Athenian for the Spartan alliance. Yet Pericles, who ever unwillingly resorted to war, and the most remarkable attribute of whose character was a profound and calculating caution, opposed the proposition of sending an armed force into Bœotia. His objections were twofold—he considered the time unseasonable, and he was averse to hazard upon an issue not immediately important to Athens, the flower of her Hoplites, or heavy-armed soldiery, of whom a thousand had offered their services in the enterprise. Nevertheless, the counsel of Tolmides, who was eager for the war, and flushed with past successes, prevailed. "If," said Pericles, "you regard not my experience, wait, at least, for the advice of TIME, that best of councillors." The saying was forgotten in the popular enthusiasm it opposed—it afterwards attained the veneration of a prophecy.*

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* A short change of administration, perhaps, accompanied the defeat of Pericles, in the debate on the Bœo-

IV. Aided by some allied troops, and especially by his thousand volunteers, Tolmides swept into Bœotia—reduced Chæronea—garrisoned the captured town, and was returning homeward, when, in the territory of Coronea, he suddenly fell in with a hostile ambush,* composed of the exiled bands of Orchomenus, of Opuntian Locrians, and the partisans of the oligarchies of Eubœa. Battle ensued, —the Athenians received a signal and memorable defeat; many were made prisoners, many slaughtered: the pride and youth of the Athenian Hoplites were left on the field; the brave and wealthy Clinias, (father to the yet more renowned Alcibiades,) and Tolmides himself were slain. But the disaster of defeat was nothing in comparison with its consequences. To recover their prisoners, the Athenian government were compelled to enter into a treaty with the hostile oligarchies, and withdraw their forces from Bœotia. On their departure, the old oligarchies everywhere replaced the friendly democracies, and the nearest neighbours of Athens were again her foes. Nor was this change con-

B.C. 447.

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tian expedition. He was evidently in power, since he had managed the public funds, during the opposition of Thucydides, but when beaten, as we should say, "on the Bœotian question," the victorious party probably came into office.

* An ambush, according to Diodorus, lib. xii.

fined to Bœotia. In Locris and Phocis the popular party fell with the fortunes of Coronea —the exiled oligarchies were re-established— and when we next read of these states, they are the allies of Sparta. At home, the results of the day of Coronea were yet more important. By the slaughter of so many of the Hoplites, the aristocratic party in Athens were greatly weakened, while the neglected remonstrances and fears of Pericles, now remembered, secured to him a respect and confidence which soon served to turn the balance against his competitor, Thucydides.

V. The first defeat of the proud mistress of the Grecian sea was a signal for the revolt of disaffected dependents. The Isle of Eubœa, the pasturages of which were now necessary to the Athenians, encouraged by the success that at Coronea had attended the arms of the Eubœan exiles, shook off the Athenian yoke. In the same year expired the five years' truce with Sparta, and that state forthwith prepared to avenge its humiliation at Delphi. Pericles seems once more to have been called into official power—he was not now supine in action. At the head of a sufficient force he crossed the channel, and landed in Eubœa. Scarce had he gained the island, when he heard that Megara

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had revolted—that the Megarians, joined by partisans from Sicyon, Epidaurus, and Corinth, had put to the sword the Athenian garrison, save a few who had ensconced themselves in Nisæa, and that an army of the Peloponnesian confederates was preparing to march to Attica. On receiving these tidings, Pericles re-embarked his forces, and returned home. Soon appeared the Peloponnesian forces, commanded by the young Pleistoanax, king of Sparta, who, being yet a minor, was placed under the guardianship of Cleandridas; the lands by the western frontier of Attica, some of the most fertile of that territory, were devastated, and the enemy penetrated to Eleusis and Thria. But not a blow was struck—they committed the aggression and departed. On their return to Sparta, Pleistoanax and Cleandridas were accused of having been bribed to betray the honour, or abandon the revenge, of Sparta. Cleandridas fled the prosecution, and was condemned to death in his exile. Pleistoanax also quitted the country, and took refuge in Arcadia, in the sanctuary of Mount Lycæum. The suspicions of the Spartans appear to have been too well founded, and Pericles, on passing his accounts that year, is stated to have put down ten talents* as devoted to a certain use—

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* Twenty talents, according to the scholiast of Aristophanes. Suidas states the amount variously at fifteen and fifty.

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an item which the assembly assented to in conscious and sagacious silence. This formidable enemy retired, Pericles once more entered Eubœa, and reduced the isle. In Chalcis, he is said by Plutarch to have expelled the opulent landowners, who, no doubt, formed the oligarchic chiefs of the revolt, and colonized Histiæa with Athenians, driving out at least the greater part of the native population.* For the latter severity was given one of the strongest apologies that the stern justice of war can plead for its harshest sentences—the Histiæans had captured an Athenian vessel and murdered the crew. The rest of the island was admitted to conditions by which the amount of tribute was somewhat oppressively increased.†

VI. The inglorious result of the Peloponnesian expedition into Attica naturally tended to make the Spartans desirous of peace upon honourable terms, while the remembrance of dangers, eluded rather than crushed, could not fail to dispose the Athenian government to conciliate a foe from whom much was to be apprehended and little gained. Negotiations were commenced and completed. The Athenians

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* Who fled into Macedonia.— Theopomp. ap. Strab. The number of Athenian colonists was one thousand, according to Diodorus—two thousand, according to Theopompus.

† Aristoph. Nub. 213.

surrendered some of the most valuable fruits of their victories, in their hold on the Peloponnesus. They gave up their claim on Nisæa and Pegæ—they renounced the footing they had established in Trœzene—they abandoned alliance or interference with Achaia, over which their influence had extended to a degree that might reasonably alarm the Spartans, since they had obtained the power to raise troops in that province, and Achæan auxiliaries had served under Pericles at the siege of Œniadæ.* Such were the conditions upon which a truce of thirty years was based.† The articles were ostensibly unfavourable to Athens. Bœotia was gone—Locris, Phocis, an internal revolution, (the result of Coronea,) had torn from their alliance. The citizens of Delphi must have regained the command of their oracle, since henceforth its sacred voice was in favour of the Spartans. Megara was lost—and now all the holds on the Peloponnesus were surrendered. These reverses, rapid and signal, might have taught the Athenians how precarious is ever the military eminence of small states. But the treaty with Sparta, if disadvantageous, was not dishonourable. It was founded upon one broad principle, without which, indeed, all peace would have been a mockery—viz. that the Athenians should not interfere with the affairs

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* Thucyd. i. 111.

† Thucyd. i. 115.

BOOK V. CHAP. I.

of the Peloponnesus. This principle acknowledged, the surrender of advantages or conquests that were incompatible with it, was but a necessary detail. As Pericles was at this time in office,* and as he had struggled against an armed interference with the Bœotian towns, so it is probable that he followed out his own policy in surrendering all right to interfere with the Peloponnesian states. Only by peace with Sparta could he accomplish his vast designs for the greatness of Athens—designs which rested not upon her land forces, but upon her confirming and consolidating her empire of the sea; and we shall shortly find, in our consideration of her revenues, additional reasons for approving a peace essential to her stability.

VII. Scarce was the truce effected, ere the struggle between Thucydides and Pericles approached its crisis. The friends of the former never omitted an occasion to charge Pericles with having too lavishly squandered the public funds upon the new buildings which adorned the city. This charge of extravagance, ever an accusation sure to be attentively received by a popular assembly, made a sensible impression. "If you think," said Pericles, to the great tribunal before which he urged his defence, "that I have expended too much, charge the sums to my account, not yours—but on this condition, let the edifices be inscribed with my name, not that of the Athenian people." This mode of defence, though perhaps but an oratorical hyperbole,* conveyed a rebuke which the Athenians were an audience calculated to answer but in one way—they dismissed the accusation, and applauded the extravagance.

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* As is evident, among other proofs, from the story before narrated of his passing his accounts to the Athenians with the item of ten talents employed as secret service money.

VIII. Accusations against public men, when unsuccessful, are the fairest stepping-stones in their career. Thucydides failed against Pericles. The death of Tolmides—the defeat of Coronea—the slaughter of the Hoplites—weakened the aristocratic party; the democracy and the democratic administration seized the occasion for a

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* The Propylæa alone (not then built) cost two thousand and twelve talents, (Harpocrat. in *προπυλαια ταῦτα*,) and some temples cost a thousand talents each. [Plut. in vit. Per.] If the speech of Pericles referred to such works as these, the offer to transfer the account to his own charge was indeed but a figure of eloquence. But, possibly, the accusation to which this offer was intended as a reply, was applicable only to some individual edifice, or some of the minor works, the cost of which his fortune might have defrayed. We can scarcely indeed suppose, that if the affected generosity were but a bombastic flourish, it could have excited any feeling but laughter among an audience so acute.

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decisive effort. Thucydides was summoned to the ostracism, and his banishment freed Pericles from his only rival for the supreme administration of the Athenian Empire.

CHAPTER II.

CAUSES OF THE POWER OF PERICLES—JUDICIAL COURTS OF THE DEPENDANT ALLIES TRANSFERRED TO ATHENS—SKETCH OF THE ATHENIAN REVENUES—PUBLIC BUILDINGS THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE RATHER THAN OF PERICLES—VICES AND GREATNESS OF ATHENS HAD THE SAME SOURCES—PRINCIPLE OF PAYMENT CHARACTERIZES THE POLICY OF THE PERIOD—IT IS THE POLICY OF CIVILISATION—COLONISATION, CLERUCHIA.

BOOK V. CHAP. II.

B.C. 444.

I. In the Age of Pericles there is that which seems to excite, in order to disappoint, curiosity. We are fully impressed with the brilliant variety of his gifts—with the influence he exercised over his times. He stands in the midst of great and immortal names, at the close of a heroic, and yet in the sudden meridian of a civilised, age. And scarcely does he recede from our gaze, ere all the evils which only his genius could keep aloof, gather and close around the city which it was the object of his life, not less to adorn as for festival than to crown as for command. It is almost as if, with Pericles, her very youth departed from Athens. Yet, so scanty are our details and historical materials, that the life of this surprising man is rather illustrated by the general light of the times than by the blaze of his own genius. His military achievements are not dazzling. No relics, save a few bold expressions, remain of the eloquence which awed or soothed, excited or restrained, the most difficult audience in the world. It is partly by analysing the works of his contemporaries—partly by noting the rise of the whole people—and partly by bringing together, and moulding into a whole, the scattered masses of his ambitious and thoughtful policy, that we alone can gauge and measure the proportions of the master-spirit of the time. The age of Pericles is the sole historian of Pericles.

This statesman was now at that period of life when public men are usually most esteemed—when, still in the vigour of manhood, they have acquired the dignity and experience of years, outlived the earlier prejudices and jealousies they excited, and see themselves surrounded by a new generation, amongst whom rivals must be less common than disciples and admirers. Step by step, through a long and consistent career, he had ascended to his present eminence, so that his rise did not startle from its suddenness; while his birth, his services, and his genius, presented a combination of claims to power that his enemies could not despise, and that justified the enthusiasm of his friends. His public character was unsullied; of the general belief of his integrity there is the highest evidence;* and even the few slanders afterwards raised against him—such as that of entering into one war to gratify the resentment of Aspasia, and into another to divert attention from his financial accounts, are libels so unsupported by any credible authority, and so absurd in themselves, that they are but a proof how few were the points on which calumny could assail him.

II. The obvious mode to account for the moral power of a man in any particular time, is to consider his own character, and to ascertain how far it is suited to command the age in which he lived, and the people whom he ruled. No Athenian, perhaps, ever possessed so many qualities as Pericles for obtaining wide and lasting influence over the various classes of his country-

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* The testimony of Thucydides (lib. ii. c. 5) alone suffices to destroy all the ridiculous imputations against the honesty of Pericles, which arose from the malice of contemporaries, and are yet perpetuated only by such writers as cannot weigh authorities. Thucydides does not only call him incorrupt, but "*clearly* or *notoriously* honest."[1] Plutarch and Isocrates serve to corroborate this testimony.

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[1] Χρημάτων τε διαφανῶς ἀδωρότατος.

BOOK V. CHAP. II.

men. By his attention to maritime affairs, he won the sailors, now the most difficult part of the population to humour or control; his encouragement to commerce secured the merchants, and conciliated the alien settlers; while the stupendous works of art, everywhere carried on, necessarily obtained the favour of the mighty crowd of artificers and mechanics whom they served to employ. Nor was it only to the practical interests, but to all the more refined, yet scarce less powerful sympathies of his countrymen, that his character appealed for support. Philosophy, with all parties, all factions, was becoming an appetite and passion. Pericles was rather the friend than the patron of philosophers. The increasing refinement of the Athenians—the vast influx of wealth that poured into the treasury from the spoils of Persia and the tributes of dependent cities, awoke the desire of art; and the graceful intellect of Pericles at once indulged and directed the desire, by advancing every species of art to its perfection. The freedom of democracy—the cultivation of the drama, (which is the oratory of poetry,)—the rise of prose literature—created the necessity of popular eloquence—and with Pericles the Athenian eloquence was born. Thus his power was derived from a hundred sources: whether from the grosser interests—the mental sympathies—the vanity—ambition—reason—or imagination of the people. And in examining the character of Pericles, and noting its harmony with his age, the admiration we bestow on himself must be shared by his countrymen. He obtained a greater influence than Pisistratus, but it rested solely on the free-will of the Athenians—it was unsupported by armed force—it was subject to the laws—it might any day be dissolved; and influence of this description is only obtained, in free states, by men who are in themselves the likeness and representative of the vast majority of the democracy they wield. Even the aristocratic party that had so long opposed him, appear, with the fall of Thucydides, to have relaxed their hostilities. In fact, they had less to resent in Pericles than in any previous leader of the democracy. He was not, like Themistocles, a daring upstart, vieing with, and eclipsing, their pretensions. He was of their own order. His name was not rendered odious to them by party proscriptions, or the memory of actual sufferings. He himself had recalled their idol Cimon—and in the measures that had humbled the Areopagus, so discreetly had he played his part, or so fortunately subordinate had been his co-operation, that the wrath of the aristocrats had fallen only on

Ephialtes. After the ostracism of Thucydides, "he became," says Plutarch,* "a new man—no longer so subservient to the multitude—and the government assumed an aristocratical, or rather monarchical, form." But these expressions in Plutarch are not to be literally received. The laws remained equally democratic—the agora equally strong—Pericles was equally subjected to the popular control; but having now acquired the confidence of the People, he was enabled more easily to direct them, or, as Thucydides luminously observes, "Not having obtained his authority unworthily, *he* was not compelled to flatter or to soothe the popular humours, but, when occasion required, he could even venture vehemently to contradict them."† The cause which the historian assigns to the effect, is one that deserves to be carefully noted by ambitious statesmen—*because* the authority of Pericles was *worthily* acquired, the People often suffered it to be even unpopularly exercised. On the other hand, this far-seeing and prudent statesman was, no doubt, sufficiently aware of the dangers to which the commonwealth was exposed, if the discontents of the great aristocratic faction were not in some degree conciliated, to induce his wise and sober patriotism, if not actually to seek the favour of his opponents, at least cautiously to shun all idle attempts to revenge past hostilities, or feed the sources of future irritation. He owed much to the singular moderation and evenness of his temper; and his debt to Anaxagoras must have been indeed great, if the lessons of that preacher of those cardinal virtues of the intellect, Serenity and Order, had assisted to form the rarest of all unions—a genius the most fervid, with passions the best regulated.

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* Plut. in vit. Per.

† Thucyd. lib. ii. c. 65.

II. It was about this time too, in all probability, that Pericles was enabled to consummate the policy he had always adopted with respect to the tributary allies. We have seen that the treasury had been removed from Delos to Athens;—it was now resolved to make Athens also the seat and centre of the judicial authority. The subject allies were compelled, if not on minor, at least on all important cases, to resort to Athenian courts of law for justice.* And thus Athens became, as it were, the metropolis of the allies. A more profound and sagacious mode of quickly establishing her empire it was impossible for ingenuity to conceive; but as it was based upon an oppression that must have been daily and intolerably felt,—that every affair of life must have called into irritating action; so, with the establishment of the empire was simultaneously planted an inevitable cause of its decay. For, though power is rarely attained without injustice, the injustice, if continued, is the never-failing principle of its corruption. And, in order to endure, Authority must hasten to divest itself of all the more odious attributes of Conquest.

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* "The model of this regulation, by which Athens obtained the most extensive influence, and an almost absolute dominion over the allies, was possibly found in other Grecian states which had subject confederates, such as Thebes, Elis, and Argos. But on account of the remoteness of many

III. As a practical statesman, one principal point of view in which we must regard Pericles is in his capacity of a financier. By English his-

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countries, it is impossible that every trifle could have been brought before the court at Athens; we must, therefore, suppose that each subject state had an inferior jurisdiction of its own, and that the supreme jurisdiction alone belonged to Athens. Can it, indeed, be supposed that persons would have travelled from Rhodes or Byzantium, for the sake of a law-suit of fifty or a hundred drachmas? In private suits a sum of money was probably fixed, above which the inferior court of the allies had no jurisdiction, while cases relating to higher sums were referred to Athens. . . There can be no doubt that public and penal causes were to a great extent decided in Athens, and the few definite statements which are extant refer to lawsuits of this nature."—*Boeckh, Pol. Econ. of Athens*, vol. ii. *p.* 142, 143, *translation.*

torians his policy and pretensions in this department have not been sufficiently considered; yet, undoubtedly, they made one of the most prominent features of his public character in the eyes of his countrymen. He is the first minister in Athens who undertook the scientific management of the national revenues, and partly from his scrupulous integrity, partly from his careful wisdom, and partly from a fortunate concurrence of circumstances, the Athenian revenues, even when the tribute was doubled, were never more prosperously administered. The first great source of the revenue was from the tributes of the confederate cities.* These, rated at four hundred and sixty talents in the time of Aristides, had increased to six hundred in the time

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* In calculating the amount of the treasure when transferred to Athens, Boeckh, (Pol. Econ. of Athens, vol. i. p. 193, translation,) is greatly misled by an error of dates. He assumes that the fund had only existed ten years when brought to Athens: whereas it had existed about seventeen, viz. from B. C. 477—to B. C. 461, or rather B. C. 460. And this would give about the amount affirmed by Diodorus, xii. p. 38, (viz. nearly 8,000 talents,) though he afterwards raises it to 10,000. But a large portion of it must have been consumed in war before the transfer. Still Boeckh rates the total of the sum transferred far too low, when he says it cannot have exceeded 1800 talents. It more probably doubled that sum.

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of Pericles; but there is no evidence to prove that the increased sum was unfairly raised, or that fresh exactions were levied, save in rare cases,* on the original subscribers to the league. The increase of a hundred and forty talents is to be accounted for partly by the quota of additional confederacies acquired since the time of Aristides, partly by the exemption from military or maritime service, voluntarily if unwisely purchased, during the administration of Cimon, by the states themselves. So far as tribute was a sign of dependence and inferiority, the impost was a hardship; but for this they who paid it are to be blamed rather than those who received.. Its practical burthen on each state, at this period, appears, in most cases, to have been incredibly light; and a very trifling degree of research will prove how absurdly exaggerated have been the invectives of ignorant or inconsiderate men, whether in ancient or modern times, on the extortions of the Athenians, and the impoverishment of their allies. Aristophanes† attributes to the empire of Athens a thousand tributary cities: the number is doubtless a poetical licence; yet when we remember the extent of territory which the league comprehended, and how crowded with cities were all the coasts and islands of Greece, we should probably fall short of the number of tributary cities if we estimated it at six hundred ; so that the tribute would not in the time of Pericles average above a talent, or 241*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*[*] English money, for each city ! Even when, in a time of urgent demand on the resources of the state,[†] Cythera fell into the hands of the Athenians,[‡] the tribute of that island was assessed but at four talents. And we find by inscriptions still extant, that some places were rated only at two thousand, and even one thousand drachmas.[§]

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* Such as Eubœa, see p. 440.

† Vesp. Aristoph. 795.

Finally, if the assessment by Aristides, of four hundred and sixty talents, was such as to give universal satisfaction from its equity and moderation, the additional hundred and forty talents in the time of Pericles could not have been an excessive increase, when we consider how much the League had extended, how many states had exchanged the service for the tribute, and how considerable was the enlarged diffusion of wealth throughout the greater part of Greece, the continued influx of gold,* and the consequent fall in value of the precious metals.

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[*] Knight's Prolegomena to Homer; see also Boeckh, (*translation,*) vol. i. p. 25.

[†] Viz. B.C. 424; Ol. 89.

[‡] Thucyd. iv. 57.

[§] See Chandler's Inscript.

IV. It was not, then, the amount of the tribute which made its hardship, nor can the Athenian government be blamed for having continued a claim voluntarily conceded to them. The original object of the tribute was the maintenance of a league against the Barbarians;—the Athenians were constituted the heads of the league, and the guardians of the tribute; some states refused service, and offered money—their own offers were accepted; other states refused both;—it was not more the interest than the duty of Athens to maintain, even by arms, the condition of the League;—so far is her policy justifiable. But she erred when she reduced allies to dependents—she erred when she transferred the treasury from the central Delos to her own state—she erred yet more when she appropriated a portion of these treasures to her own purposes. But these vices of Athens are the vices of all eminent states, monarchic or republican—for they are the vices of the powerful. "It was," say the Athenian ambassadors in Thucydides, with honest candour and profound truth,—"it was from the nature of the thing itself that we were at first *compelled* to advance our empire to what it is—chiefly through fear—next for honour—and, lastly, for interest; and then it seemed no longer safe for us to venture to let go the reins of government, for the revolters would have gone over to you," (viz., to the Spartans.)*

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* In the time of Alcibiades the tribute was raised to one thousand three hundred talents, and even this must have been most unequally assessed, if it were really the pecuniary hardship the allies insisted upon and complained of. But the resistance made to imposts upon matters of *feeling* or *principle* in our own country, as, at this day, in the case of church-rates, may show the real nature of the grievance. It was not the amount paid, but partly the degradation of paying it, and partly, perhaps resentment, in many places, at some unfair assessment. Discontent exaggerates every burthen, and a feather is as heavy as a mountain when laid on unwilling shoulders. When the new arrangement was made by Alcibiades, or the later demagogues, Andocides asserts that some of the allies left their native countries and emigrated to Thurii. But how many Englishmen have emigrated to America from objections to a peculiar law or a peculiar impost, which state policy still vindicates, or state necessity still maintains! The Irish Catholic peasant in reality would not perhaps, be much better off, in a pecuniary point of view, if the tithes were transferred to the rental of the landlord, yet Irish Catholics have emigrated in hundreds from the oppression, real or imaginary, of Protestant tithe-owners. Whether in ancient times or modern, it is not the amount of taxation that makes the grievance. People will pay a pound for what they like, and grudge a farthing for what they hate. I have myself known men quit England because of the stamp duty on newspapers!

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* Thucyd. lib. i. c. 75; Bloomfield's Translation.

Thus does the universal lesson of history teach us that it is the tendency of Power, in what hands soever it be placed, to widen its limits, to increase its vigour, in proportion as the counteracting force resigns the security for its administration, or the remedy for its abuse.

V. Pericles had not scrupled, from the date of the transfer of the Treasury to Athens, to devote a considerable proportion of the general tribute to public buildings and sacred exhibitions—purposes purely Athenian. But he did so openly—he sought no evasion or disguise—he maintained in the face of Greece that the Athenians were not responsible to the allies for these contributions, that it was the Athenians who had resisted and defended the Barbarians, while many of the confederate states had supplied neither ships nor soldiers, that Athens was now the head of a mighty league, and, that to increase her glory, to cement her power, was a duty she owed no less to the allies than to herself. Arguments to which armies, and not orators, could alone reply.*

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* A sentiment thus implied by the Athenian ambassadors: "We are not the first who began the custom which has ever been an established one, that the weaker should be kept under by the stronger." The Athenians had, however, an excuse more powerful than that of the ancient Rob Roys. It was the

The principal other sources whence the Athenian revenue was derived, it may be desirable here to state as briefly and as clearly as the nature of the subject will allow. By those who would search more deeply, the long and elaborate statistics of Boeckh must be carefully explored. Those sources of revenue were—

1st. Rents from corporate estates—such as pastures, forests, rivers, salt-works, houses, theatres, &c. and mines, let for terms of years, or on heritable leases.

2ndly. Tolls, export and import duties, probably paid only by strangers, and amounting to two per cent., a market excise, and the twentieth part of all exports and imports levied in the dependent allied cities—the last a considerable item.

3dly. Tithes, levied only on lands held in usufruct, as estates belonging to temples.

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general opinion of the time that the *revolt* of dependent Allies *might* be fairly punished by one that could punish them—(so the Corinthians take care to observe.) And it does not appear that the Athenian empire at this period was more harsh than that of other states to their dependents. The Athenian ambassadors (Thucyd. i. 78) not only quote the far more galling oppressions the Ionians and the isles had undergone from the Mede, but hint that the Spartans had been found much harder masters than the Athenians.

4thly. A protection tax,* paid by the settlers, or Metœci, common to most of the Greek states, but peculiarly productive in Athens from the number of strangers that her trade, her festivals, and her renown attracted. The policy of Pericles could not fail to increase this source of revenue.

5thly. A slave tax of three obols per head.†

Most of these taxes appear to have been farmed out.

6thly. Judicial fees and fines. As we have seen that the allies in most important trials were compelled to seek justice in Athens, this, in the time of Pericles, was a profitable source of income. But it was one, the extent of which necessarily depended upon peace.

Fines were of many classes, but not, at least in this period, of very great value to the state. Sometimes (as in all private accusations) the fine fell to the plaintiff, sometimes a considerable proportion enriched the treasury of the tutelary goddess. The task of assessing the fines was odious, and negligently performed by the authorities, while it was easy for those interested to render a false account of their property.

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* Only twelve drachmæ each yearly; the total, therefore, is calculated by the inestimable learning of Boeck not to have exceeded twenty-one talents.

† Total estimated at thirty-three talents.

Lastly. The state received the aid of annual contributions, or what were termed *liturgies*, from individuals for particular services.

The ordinary liturgies were, 1st. The Choregia, or duty of furnishing the *chorus* for the plays—tragic, comic, and satirical—of remunerating the leader of the singers and musicians—of maintaining the latter while trained—of supplying the dresses, the golden crowns and masks, and, indeed, the general decorations and equipments of the theatre. He on whom this burthensome honour fell was called Choregus; his name, and that of his tribe, was recorded on the tripod which commemorated the victory of the successful poet, whose performances were exhibited.*

2ndly. The Gymnasiarchy, or charge of providing for the expense of the torch-race, celebrated in honour of the gods of Fire, and some other sacred games. In later times the gymnasiarchy comprised the superintendence of the training schools, and the cost of ornamenting the arena.

3rdly. The Architheoria, or task of maintaining the embassy to sacred games and festivals.

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* The state itself contributed largely to the plays, and the lessee of the theatre was also bound to provide for several expenses, in consideration of which he received the entrance money.

And, 4thly, the Hestiasis, or feasting of the tribes, a costly obligation incurred by some wealthy member of each tribe for entertaining the whole of the tribe at public, but not very luxurious, banquets. This last expense did not often occur. The hestiasis was intended for sacred objects, connected with the rites of hospitality, and served to confirm the friendly intercourse between the members of the tribe.

These three ordinary liturgies had all a religious character; they were compulsory on those possessed of property not less than three talents—they were discharged in turn by the tribes, except when volunteered by individuals.

VI. The expenses incurred for the defence or wants of the state were not regular, but *extraordinary* liturgies—such as the TRIERARCHY, or equipment of ships, which entailed also the obligation of personal service on those by whom the triremes were fitted out. Personal service was indeed the characteristic of all liturgies, a property-tax, which was not yet invented, alone excepted; and this, though bearing the name, has not the features, of a liturgy. Of the extraordinary liturgies, the trierarchy was the most important. It was of very early origin. Boeckh observes* that it was mentioned in the time of Hippias. At the period of which we treat each vessel had one trierarch. The vessel was given to the trierarch, sometimes ready equipped; he also received the public money for certain expenses; others fell on himself.† Occasionally, but rarely, an ambitious or patriotic trierarch defrayed the whole cost; but in any case he rendered strict account of the expenses incurred. The cost of a whole trierarchy was not less than forty minas, nor more than a talent.

VIII. Two liturgies could not be demanded simultaneously from any individual, nor was he liable to any one more often than every other year. He who served the trierarchies was exempted from all other contributions. Orphans were exempted till the year after they had obtained their majority, and a similar exemption was, in a very few instances, the reward of eminent public services. The nine Archons were also exempted from the trierarchies.

VIII. The moral defects of liturgies were the defects of a noble theory, which almost always terminates in practical abuses. Their principle was that of making it an honour to contribute to the public splendour, or the national wants. Hence, in the earlier times, an emulation among the rich to purchase favour by a liberal, but often calculating and interested, ostentation ;—hence, among the poor, actuated by an equal ambition, was created so great a necessity for riches as the means to power,* that the mode by which they were to be acquired was often overlooked. What the theory designed as the munificence of patriotism, became in practice but a showy engine of corruption ; and men vied with each other in the choregia or the trierarchy, not so much for the sake of service done to the state, as in the hope of influence acquired over the people. I may also observe, that in a merely fiscal point of view, the principle of liturgies was radically wrong ; that principle went to tax the few, instead of the many ; its operation was therefore not more unequal in its assessments than it was unproductive to the state, in proportion to its burthen on individuals.

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* On the authority of Pseud. Arist. Œcon. 2—4.

† In the expedition against Sicily the state supplied the vessel and paid the crew. The trierarchs equipped the ship and gave voluntary contributions besides.—Thucyd. vi. 31.

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* Liturgies, with most of the Athenian laws that seemed to harass the rich personally, enhanced their station and authority politically. It is clear that wherever wealth is made most obviously available to the state, there it will be most universally respected. Thus is it ever in commercial countries. In Carthage of old, where, according to Aristotle, wealth was considered virtue, and in England at this day, where wealth, if not virtue, is certainly *respectability*.

IX. The various duties were farmed—a pernicious plan of finance common to most of the Greek states. The farmers gave sureties, and punctuality was rigorously exacted from them, on penalty of imprisonment, the doubling of the debt, the confiscation of their properties, the compulsory hold upon their sureties.

X. Such were the main sources of the Athenian revenue. Opportunities will occur to fill up the brief outline, and amplify each detail. This sketch is now presented to the reader as comprising a knowledge necessary to a clear insight into the policy of Pericles. A rapid glance over the preceding pages will suffice to show that it was on a rigid avoidance of all unnecessary war—above all, of distant and perilous enterprises, that the revenue of Athens rested. Her commercial duties—her tax on settlers—the harvest of judicial fees, obtained from the dependent allies—the chief profits from the mines,—all rested upon the maintenance of peace: even the foreign tribute, the most productive of the Athenian resources, might fail at once, if the Athenian arms should sustain a single reverse, as indeed it did after the fatal battle of Ægospotamos.* This it was which might have shown to the great finance minister, that peace with the Peloponnesus could scarce be too dearly purchased.† The surrender of a few towns and fortresses was nothing in comparison with the arrest and paralysis of all the springs of her wealth, which would be the necessary result of a long war upon her own soil. For this reason Pericles strenuously checked all

* And so well aware of the uncertain and artificial tenure of the Athenian power were the Greek statesmen, that we find it among the arguments with which the Corinthians some time after supported the Peloponnesian war, 'that the Athenians, if they lost one sea-fight, would be utterly subdued;'[1]—nor, even without such a mischance, could the flames of a war be kindled, but what the obvious expedient[2] of the enemy would be to excite the Athenian allies to revolt, and the stoppage or diminution of the tribute would be the necessary consequence.

† If the courts of law among the allies were not removed to Athens till after the truce with Peloponnesus, and indeed till after the ostracism of Thucydides, the rival of Pericles, the value of the judicial fees did not of course make one of the considerations for peace, but there would then have been the mightier consideration of the design of that transfer which peace only could effect.

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[1] Thucyd. lib. i. c. 121.

[2] As the Corinthians indeed suggested, Thucyd. lib. i. c 122.

the wild schemes of the Athenians for extended empire. Yet dazzled with the glories of Cimon, some entertained the hopes of recovering Egypt, some agitated the invasion of the Persian coasts; the fair and fatal Sicily already aroused the cupidity or ambition of others; and the vain enthusiasts of the Agora even dreamed of making that island the base and centre of a new and vast dominion, including Carthage on one hand, and Etruria on the other.* Such schemes it was the great object of Pericles to oppose. He was not less ambitious for the greatness of Athens than the most daring of these visionaries; but he better understood on what foundations it should be built. His objects were to strengthen the possessions already acquired, to confine the Athenian energies within the frontiers of Greece, and to curb, as might better be done by peace than war, the Peloponnesian forces to their own rocky barriers. The means by which he sought to attain these objects were, 1st, by a maritime force; 2ndly, by that inert and silent power which springs as it were from the moral dignity and renown of a nation;—whatever, in this latter respect, could make Athens illustrious, made Athens formidable.

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* Plut. in vit. Per.

XI. Then rapidly progressed those glorious fabrics which seemed, as Plutarch gracefully expresses it, endowed with the bloom of a perennial youth. Still the houses of private citizens remained simple and unadorned; still were the streets narrow and irregular; and even centuries afterwards, a stranger entering Athens would not at first have recognised the claims of the mistress of Grecian art. But to the homeliness of her common thoroughfares and private mansions, the magnificence of her public edifices now made a dazzling contrast. The Acropolis that towered above the homes and thoroughfares of men—a spot too sacred for human habitation —became, to use a proverbial phrase, "a City of the Gods." The citizen was everywhere to be reminded of the majesty of the STATE—his patriotism was to be increased by the pride in her beauty—his taste to be elevated by the spectacle of her splendour. Thus flocked to Athens all who throughout Greece were eminent in art. Sculptors and architects vied with each other in adorning the young Empress of the Seas;* then rose the masterpieces of Phidias, of Callicrates, of Mnesicles,† which, even, either in their broken remains, or in the feeble copies of imitators less inspired, still command so intense a wonder, and furnish models so immortal. And if, so to speak, their bones and relics excite our awe and envy, as testifying of a lovelier and grander race, which the deluge of time has swept away, what, in that day, must have been their brilliant effect—unmutilated in their fair proportions—fresh in all their lineaments and hues? For their beauty was not limited to the symmetry of arch and column, nor their materials confined to the marbles of Pentelicus and Paros. Even the exterior of the temples glowed with the richest harmony of colours, and was decorated with the purest gold; an atmosphere peculiarly favourable both to the display and the preservation of art, permitted to external pediments and friezes all the minuteness of ornament—all the brilliancy of colours;—such as in the interior of Italian churches may yet be seen—vitiated, in the last, by a gaudy and barbarous taste. Nor did the Athenians spare any cost upon the works that were, like the tombs and tripods of their heroes, to be the monuments of a nation to distant ages, and to transmit the most irrefragable proof 'that the

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* "As a vain woman decked out with jewels," was the sarcastic reproach of the allies.—Plut. in vit Per.

† The Propylæa was built under the direction of Mnesicles.

It was begun 437 B.C., in the archonship of Euthymenes, three years after the Samian war, and completed in five years.—Harpocrat. in προπυλαια ταῦτα.

power of ancient Greece was not an idle legend.'* The whole democracy were animated with the passion of Pericles; and when Phidias recommended marble as a cheaper material than ivory for the great statue of Minerva, it was for that reason that ivory was preferred by the unanimous voice of the assembly. Thus, whether it were extravagance or magnificence, the blame in one case, the admiration in another, rests not more with the minister than the populace. It was, indeed, the great characteristic of those works, that they were entirely the creations of the people: without the people, Pericles could not have built a temple, or engaged a sculptor. The miracles of that day resulted from the enthusiasm of a population yet young—full of the first ardour for the Beautiful—dedicating to the State, as to a mistress, the trophies honourably won, or the treasures injuriously extorted—and uniting the resources of a nation with the energy of an individual, because the toil, the cost, were borne by those who succeeded to the enjoyment and arrogated the glory.

XII. It was from two sources that Athens derived her chief political vices; 1st, Her empire of the seas, and her exactions from her allies; 2ndly, an unchecked, unmitigated democratic action, void of the two vents known in all modern commonwealths—the Press, and a Representative, instead of a Popular, assembly. But from these sources she now drew all her greatness also, moral and intellectual. Before the Persian war, and even scarcely before the time of Cimon, Athens cannot be said to have eclipsed her neighbours in the arts and sciences. She became the centre and capital of the most polished communities of Greece, and she drew into a focus all the Grecian intellect; she obtained from her dependents the wealth to administer the arts, which universal traffic and intercourse taught her to appreciate; and thus the Odeon, and the Parthenon, and the Propylæa arose! During the same administration, the fortifications were completed, and a third wall, parallel* and near to that uniting Piræus with Athens, consummated the works of Themistocles and Cimon, and preserved the communication between the two-fold city, even should the outer walls fall into the hands of an enemy.

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* Plut. in vit. Per.

But honour and wealth alone would not have sufficed for the universal emulation, the universal devotion to all that could adorn or exalt the nation. It was the innovations of Aristides and Ephialtes that breathed into that abstract and cold formality, THE STATE, the breath and vigour of a pervading people, and made the meanest citizen struggle for Athens with that zeal with which an ambitious statesman struggles for himself.* These two causes united reveal to us the true secret why Athens obtained a pre-eminence in intellectual grandeur over the rest of Greece. Had Corinth obtained the command of the seas, and the treasury of Delos—had Corinth established, abroad, a power equally arbitrary and extensive, and, at home, a democracy equally broad and pure—Corinth might have had her Pericles and Demosthenes, her Phidias, her Sophocles, her Aristophanes, her Plato—and posterity might not have allowed the claim of Athens to be the ελλας ελλαδος, "the Greece of Greece."

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* See Arnold's Thucydides, ii. 13, note 12.

XIII. But the increase of wealth bounded not its effects to these magnificent works of art—they poured into and pervaded the whole domestic policy of Athens. We must recollect, that as the greatness of the State was that of the democracy, so its treasures were the property of the free population. It was *the People* who were rich; and according to all the notions of political economy in that day, the people desired practically to enjoy their own opulence. Thus was introduced the principle of payment for service, and thus was sanctioned and legalised the right of a common admission to spectacles, the principal cost of which was defrayed from common property. That such innovations would be the necessary and unavoidable result of an overflowing treasury in a state thus democratic, is so obvious, that nothing can be more absurd than to lay the blame of the change upon Pericles. He only yielded to, and regulated, the irresistible current of the general wish. And we may also observe, that most of those innovations, which were ultimately injurious to Athens, rested upon the acknowledged maxims of modern civilisation,—some were rather erroneous from details than principles; others, from the want of harmony between the new principles and the old constitution to which they were applied. Each of the elements might be healthful—amalgamated, they produced a poison.

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* "Their bodies, too, they employ for the state, as if they were any one's else but their own, but with minds completely their own, they are ever ready to render it service."—Thucyd. i. 70, Bloomfield's translation.

XIV. It is, for instance, an axiom in modern politics, that judges should receive a salary.*

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* With us juries as well as judges are paid, and in ordinary cases, at as low a rate as the Athenian dicasts, (the different value of money being considered,) viz. common jurymen one shilling for each trial, and, in the Sheriffs' Court, fourpence. What was so pernicious in Athens is perfectly harmless in England; it was the large number of the dicasts which

During the administration of Pericles, this principle was applied to the dicasts, in the popular courts of judicature. It seems probable that the vast accession of law business which ensued from the transfer of the courts in the allied states to the Athenian tribunal, was the cause of this enactment. Lawsuits became so common, that it was impossible, without salaries, that the citizens could abandon their own business for that of others. Payment was, therefore, both equitable and unavoidable, and doubtless, it would have seemed to the Athenians as now to us, the best means, not only of securing the attention, but of strengthening the integrity, of the judges or the jurors. The principle of salaries was, therefore, right, but its results were evil, when applied to the peculiar constitution of the courts. The salary was small—the judges numerous, and mostly of the humblest class—the consequences I have before shown.* Had the salaries been high, and the number of the judges small, the means of a good judicature would have been attained. But, then, according to the notions, not only of Athenian, but of all the Hellenic, democracies, the democracy itself, of which the popular courts were deemed the constitutional bulwark and the vital

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made the mischief, and not the system of payment itself, as unreflecting writers have so often asserted.

[*] See pp. 391—393 of this volume.

essence, would have been at an end. In this error, therefore, however fatal it might be, neither Pericles nor the Athenians, but the theories of the age, are to be blamed.* It is also a maxim formerly acted upon in England, to which many political philosophers now incline, and which is yet adopted in the practice of a great and enlightened portion of the world, that the members of the legislative assembly should receive salaries. This principle was now applied in Athens.† But there, the people themselves were the legislative assembly—and thus, a principle, perhaps, sound in itself, became vitiated to the absurdity of the people as sovereign paying the people as legislative. Yet even this might have been necessary to the preservation of the constitution, as meetings became numerous and business complicated; for if the people had not been tempted and even driven to assemble in large masses, the business of the state would have been jobbed away by active minorities, and the life of a democracy

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* At first the payment of the dicasts was one obolus.—(Aristoph. Nubes, 861.) Afterwards, under Cleon, it seems to have been increased to three; it is doubtful whether it was in the interval ever *two* obols. Constant mistakes are made between the pay, and even the constitution, of the ecclesiasts and the dicasts. But the reader must carefully remember that the former were the popular *legislators*, the latter, the popular *judges* or jurors—their functions were a mixture of both.

† Μισθὸς εκκλησιαστικὸς—the pay of the ecclesiasts, or popular assembly.

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been lost.* The payment was first one obolus—afterwards increased to three. Nor must we suppose, as the ignorance or effrontery of certain modern historians has strangely asserted, that in the new system of payments, the people were munificent only to themselves. The senate was paid—the public advocates and orators were paid—so were the ambassadors, the inspectors of the youths in the trading schools, the nomothetæ or law-commissioners, the physicians, the singers, even the poets ;—all the servants of the different offices received salaries. And now, as is the inevitable consequence of that civilisation in a commercial society which multiplies and strongly demarcates the divisions of labour—the safety of the state no longer rested solely upon the unpurchased arms and hearts of its citizens—but not only were the Athenians themselves who served as soldiers paid, but foreign mercenaries were engaged—a measure in consonance with the characteristic policy of Pericles, which was especially frugal of the lives of the citizens. But peculiar to the Athenians, of all the Grecian states, was the humane and beautiful provision for the poor, commenced under Solon or Pisistratus. At this happy and brilliant period few were in need of it—war and disaster, while they increased the number of the destitute, widened the charity of the state.

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* We know not how far the paying of the ecclesiasts was the work of Pericles: if it were, it must have been at, or after, the time we now enter upon, as, according to Aristophanes, (Eccles. 302,) the people were not paid during the power of Myronides, who flourished, and must have fallen, with Thucydides, the defeated rival of Pericles.

XV. Thus, then, that general system of payment which grew up under Pericles, and produced many abuses under his successors, was, after all, but the necessary result of the increased civilisation and opulence of the period. Nor can we wonder that the humbler or the middle orders, who, from their common stock, lavished generosity upon genius,* and alone, of all contemporaneous states, gave relief to want—who maintained the children of all who died in war—who awarded remunerations for every service, should have deemed it no grasping exaction to require for their own attendance on offices forced on them by the constitution, a compensation for the desertion of their private affairs, little exceeding that which was conferred upon the very paupers of the state.†

* The Athenians could extend their munificence even to foreigners, as their splendid gift, said to have been conferred on Herodotus, and the sum of ten thousand drachmas, which Isocrates declares them to have bestowed on Pindar.[1]

† The pay of the dicast and the ecclesiast was, as we have just seen, first one, then three, obols; and the money paid to

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[1] Isoc. de Antidosi.

XVI. But there was another abuse which sprang out of the wealth of the people, and that love for spectacles and exhibitions which was natural to the lively Ionic imagination, and could not but increase as leisure and refinement became boons extended to the bulk of the population—an abuse trifling in itself—fatal in the precedent it set. While the theatre was of wood, free admissions were found to produce too vast a concourse for the stability of the building; and once, indeed, the seats gave way. It was, therefore, long before the present period, deemed advisable to limit the number of the audience by a small payment of two obols for each seat; and this continued after a stately edifice of stone replaced the wooden temple of the earlier drama.

But as riches flowed into the treasury, and as the drama became more and more the most splendid and popular of the national exhibitions, it seemed but just to return to the ancient mode of gratuitous admissions. It was found, however, convenient, partly, perhaps, for greater order, and for the better allotment of the seats—partly, also, for the payment of several expenses which

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the infirm was never less than one, nor more than two, obols a-day. The common sailors, in time of peace, received four obols a-day. Neither an ecclesiast nor a dicast was, therefore, paid so much as a common sailor.

fell not on the state but individuals—and partly, no doubt, to preserve the distinctions between the citizens and the strangers, to maintain the prices, but to allow to those whose names were enrolled in the book of the citizens, the admittance money from the public treasury. This fund was called the THEORICON. But the example once set, Theorica were extended to other festivals besides those of the drama,* and finally, under the plausible and popular pretext of admitting the poorer classes to those national or religious festivals, from which, as forming the bulk of the nation, it was against the theory of the constitution to exclude them, paved the way to lavish distributions of the public money, which at once tended to exhaust the wealth of the state, and to render effeminate and frivolous the spirit of the people. But these abuses were not yet visible: on the contrary, under Pericles, the results of the Theoricon were highly favourable to the manners and genius of the people. Art was thus rendered the universal right, and while refinement of taste became diffused, the patriotism of the citizens was increased by the consciousness that they were the common and legitimate arbiters of all which augmented the splendour and renown of Athens.

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* Such as the Panathenæa and Hieromeniæ.

Thus, in fact, the after evils that resulted from the more popular part of the internal policy of Pericles, it was impossible to foresee; they originated not in a single statesman, but in the very nature of civilisation. And as in despotisms, a coarse and sensual luxury, once established, rots away the vigour and manhood of a conquering people, so in this intellectual republic it was the luxury of the intellect which gradually enervated the great spirit of the victor race of Marathon and Salamis, and called up generations of eloquent talkers and philosophical dreamers from the earlier age of active freemen, restless adventurers, and hardy warriors. The spirit of poetry, or the pampered indulgence of certain faculties to the prejudice of others, produced in a whole people what it never fails to produce in the individual:—It unfitted them—just as they grew up into a manhood exposed to severer struggles than their youth had undergone—for the stern and practical demands of life; and suffered the love of the Beautiful to subjugate or soften away the common knowledge of the Useful. Genius itself became a disease, and Poetry assisted towards the euthanasia of the Athenians.

XVII. As all the measures of Pericles were directed towards consolidating the Athenian empire, so under his administration was not omitted the politic expedient of colonisation. Of late years, states having become confirmed and tribes settled, the Grecian migrations were far less frequent than of old; and one principal cause of colonisation, in the violent feud of parties, and the expulsion of a considerable number of citizens, arose from the disasters of infant communities, and was no longer in force, under the free but strong government of Athens. As with the liberties fell the commerce of Miletus and Ionia, so also another principal source of the old colonisation became comparatively languid and inert. But now, under the name of Cleruchi,* a new description of colonists arose—colonists by whom the mother country not only drafted off a redundant population, or rid herself of restless adventurers, but struck the roots of her empire in the various places that came under her control. In the classic as in the feudal age, conquest gave the right to the lands of the conquered country. Thus had arisen, and thus still existed, upon the plundered lands of Laconia, the Commonwealth of Sparta,—thus were maintained the wealthy and luxurious nobles of Thessaly—and thus, in fine, were created all the ancient Dorian oligarchies. After the return of the Heraclidæ, this mode of consummating conquest fell into disuse, not from any moral conviction of its injustice, but because the wars between the various states rarely terminated in victories so complete as to permit the seizure of the land and the subjugation of the inhabitants. And it must be ever remembered, that the old Grecian tribes made war to procure a settlement, and not to increase dominion. The smallness of their population rendered human life too valuable to risk its waste in the expeditions that characterised the ambition of the leaders of Oriental hordes. But previous to the Persian wars, the fertile meadows of Eubœa presented to the Athenians a temptation it could scarcely be expected that victorious neighbours would have the abstinence to forego; and we have seen that they bestowed the lands of the Hippobotæ on Athenian settlers. These colonists evacuated their possessions during the Persian war: the Hippobotæ returned, and seem to have held quiet, but probably tributary, possession of their ancient estates, until after the recent retreat of the Peloponnesians. Pericles defeated and displaced them; their lands fell once more to Athenian colonists; and the north of Eubœa was protected and garrisoned by the erection of Oreus, a new town that supplanted the old Histiæa. Territories in Scyros, Lemnos, and Imbros, had been also bestowed on Athenian settlers during the earlier successes of the Athenian arms—and the precedent thus set, examples became more numerous, under the profound and systematic policy of Pericles. This mode of colonisation, besides the ordinary advantages of all colonisation, proffered two peculiar to itself. In the first place, it supplied the deficiency of land, which was one of the main inconveniences of Attica, and rewarded the meritorious or appeased the avaricious citizens, with estates which it did not impoverish the mother country to grant. 2ndly. It secured the conquests of the state by planting garrisons which it cost little to maintain.* Thus were despatched by Pericles a thousand men to the valuable possessions in the Chersonese, two hundred and fifty to Andros, five hundred to Naxos, a thousand to Thrace. At another period, the date of which is uncertain, but probably shortly subsequent to the truce with the Peloponnesians, a large fleet, commanded by Pericles, swept the Euxine, in order to awe and impress the various states and nations along the adjacent coasts, whether Greek or Barbarian, with the display of the Athenian power; and the city of Sinope, being at that time divided with contentions for and against its tyrant Timesilaus, the republican party applied to the head of the Greek democracies for aid. Lamachus, a warrior to whose gallant name, afterwards distinguished in the Peloponnesian war, Aristophanes has accorded the equal honour of his ridicule and his praise, was entrusted with thirteen galleys, and a competent force for the expulsion of the tyrant and his adherents. The object effected, the new government of Sinope rewarded six hundred Athenians with the freedom of the city and the estates of the defeated faction.

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* From *κληροι*, lots. The estates and settlements of a cleruchia were divided amongst a certain number of citizens by lot.

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* The state only provided the settlers with arms, and defrayed the expenses of their journey.—See Boeckh. Pol. Econ. of Athens, vol. ii. p. 170. (Translation.)

While thus Athens fixed her footing on remoter lands, gradually her grasp extended over the more near and necessary demesnes of Eubœa, until the lands of more than two-thirds of that island were in the possession of Athenians.* At a later period, new opportunities gave rise to new cleruchiæ.†

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* Andoc. Orat. de Pace.

† These institutions differed, therefore, from colonies prin-

XVIII. Besides these cleruchiæ, in the second year of the supreme administration of Pericles, a colony, properly so called, was established in Western Italy—interesting alike from the great names of its early adventurers, the beauty of its site, and from the circumstance of its being, besides that at Amphipolis,

cipally in this:—the mother-country retained a firm hold over the cleruchi—could recal them or reclaim their possessions, as a penalty of revolt:—the cleruchi retained all the rights, and were subject to most of the conditions, of citizens.[1] Lands were given without the necessity of quitting Athens—departure thence was voluntary, although it was the ordinary choice. But whether the cleruchi remained at home, or repaired to their settlement, they were equally attached to Athenian interests. From their small number, and the enforced and unpopular nature of their tenure, their property, unlike that of ordinary colonists, depended on the power and safety of the parent state: they were not so much transplanted shoots, as extended branches of one tree, taking their very life from the same stem. In modern times, Ireland suggests a parallel to the old cleruchiæ,—in the gift of lands to English adventurers—in the long and intimate connexion which subsisted between the manners, habits, and political feeling of the English settlers and the parent state—in the separation between the settlers and the natives; and in the temporary power and subsequent feebleness which resulted to the home government from the adoption of a system which garrisoned the land, but exasperated the inhabitants.

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[1] Except, for instance, the Liturgies.

the only pure and legitimate colony,* in contradistinction to the cleruchiæ, founded by Athens, since her ancient migrations to Ionia and the Cyclades. Two centuries before, some Achæans mingled with Trœzenians had established, in the fertile garden of Magna Græcia, the state of Sybaris. Placed between two rivers, the Crathis and the Sybaris—possessing extraordinary advantages of site and climate, this celebrated colony rose with unparalleled rapidity to eminence in war and luxury in peace. So great were its population and resources, that it is said by Diodorus to have brought at one time three hundred thousand men into the field—an army which doubled that which all Greece could assemble at Platæa! The exaggeration is evident; but it still attests the belief of a populousness and power which must have rested upon no fabulous foundation. The state of Sybaris had prospered for a time by the adoption of a principle which is ever apt to force civilisation to premature developement, and not unfrequently to end in the destruction of national character and internal stability—viz. it opened its arms to strangers of every tribe and class. Thronged by mercantile adventurers, its trade, like that of Agrigentum, doubtless derived its sources from the oil and wine which it poured into the harbours of Africa and Gaul. As with individuals, so with states, wealth easily obtained is prodigally spent, and the effeminate and voluptuous ostentation of Sybaris passed into a proverb more enduring than her prosperity. Her greatness acquired by a tempered and active democracy received a mortal blow by the usurpation of a tyrant named Telys, who, in 510 B.C., expelled five hundred of the principal citizens. Croton received the exiles, a war broke out, and in the same year, or shortly afterwards, the Crotoniates, under Milo, defeated the Sybarites with prodigious slaughter, and the city was abandoned to pillage, and left desolate and ruined. Those who survived fled to Laos and Scidrus. Fifty-eight years afterwards, aided by some Thessalians, the exiled Sybarites again sought possession of their former settlement, but were speedily expelled by the Crotoniates. It was now that they applied to Sparta and Athens for assistance. The former state had neither population to spare, nor commerce to strengthen, nor ambition to gratify, and rejected the overtures of the Sybarite envoys. But a different success awaited the exiles at Athens. Their

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* Nor were even these composed solely of Athenians, but of mixed and various races. The colony to Amphipolis (B.C. 465,) is the first recorded colony of the Athenians after the great Ionic migrations.

BOOK V. CHAP. II.

B.C. 443. proposition, timed in a period when it was acceptable to the Athenian policy, was enforced by Pericles. Adventurers from all parts of Greece, but invited especially from the Peloponnesus, swelled the miscellaneous band: eminent among the rest were Lysias, afterwards so celebrated as a rhetorician,[*] and Herodotus, the historian.

As in the political code of Greece the religious character of the people made a pervading principle, so in colonisation the Deity of the parent state transplanted His worship with His votaries, and the relation between the new and the old country was expressed and perpetuated by the touching symbol of taking fire from the Prytaneum of the native city. B.C. 443. A renowned diviner, named Lampon,[†] whose sacred pretensions did not preserve him from the ridicule of the comic poets,[‡] accompanied the emigrants, and an oracle dictated the site of the new colony near the ancient city, and by the Fountain of Thurium. The Sybarites, with the common vanity of men whose ancestors have been greater than themselves, increased their pretensions in proportion as they lost their power; they affected superiority over their companions, by whose swords alone they again existed as a people; claimed the exclusive monopoly of the principal offices of government, and the first choice of lands; and were finally cut off by the very allies whose aid they had sought, and whose resentment they provoked. New adventurers from Greece replaced the Sybarites, and the colonists of Thurium, divided into ten tribes,—(four, the representatives of the united Ionians, Eubœans, Islanders, and Athenians; three, of the Peloponnesians; and three, of the settlers from Northern Greece,)—retained peaceable possession of their delightful territory, and harmonised their motley numbers by the adoption of the enlightened laws and tranquil institutions of Charondas.—Such was the home of Herodotus, the Historian.

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[*] In the year in which the colony of Thurium or Thurii was founded, the age of Lysias was fifteen, that of Herodotus forty-one.

[†] Plut. in vit. Per. Schol. Aristoph. Av. 521.

[‡] Viz. Callias, Lysippus, and Cratinus.—See Athenæus, lib. viii. p. 344. The worthy man seems to have had the amiable infirmities of a *bon vivant*.

CHAPTER III.

REVISION OF THE CENSUS—SAMIAN WAR—SKETCH OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE ATHENIAN COMEDY TO THE TIME OF ARISTOPHANES.

BOOK V. CHAP. III.

I. In proportion as it had become matter of honourable pride and lucrative advantage to be a citizen of Athens, it was natural that the laws defining and limiting the freedom of the city should increase in strictness. Even before the time of Themistocles, those only were considered legitimate,* who, on either side, derived parentage from Athenian citizens. But though illegitimate, they were not therefore deprived of the rights of citizenship; nor had the stain upon his birth been a serious obstacle to the career of Themistocles himself. Under Pericles, the law became more severe, and a decree was passed (apparently in the earlier period of his rising

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* Plut. in vit. Them.

BOOK V.
CHAP. III.

power,) which excluded from the freedom of the city those whose parents were not both Athenian. In the very year in which he attained the supreme administration of affairs, occasion for enforcing the law occurred: Psammetichus, the pretender to the Egyptian throne, sent a present of corn to the Athenian people; the claimants for a share in the gift underwent the ordeal of scrutiny as to their titles to citizenship, and no less than five thousand persons were convicted of having fraudulently foisted themselves into rights which were now tantamount to property; they were disfranchised;* and the whole list of the free citizens

B.C. 444.

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* Historians, following the received text in Plutarch, have retailed the incredible story, that the rejected claimants were sold for slaves; but when we consider the extraordinary agitation it must have caused to carry such a sentence against so many persons, amounting to a fourth part of the free population—when we remember the numerous connexions, extending throughout at least four times their own number, which five thousand persons living long undisturbed and unsuspected as free citizens must have formed, it is impossible to conceive that such rigour could even have been attempted, without creating revolution, sedition, or formidable resistance. Yet this measure, most important if attended with such results—most miraculous if not—is passed over in total silence by Thucydides, and by every other competent authority. A luminous emendation by Mr. Clinton (Fast. Hell. vol. ii. second edition, pp. 52 and 390, note p.) restores the proper meaning. Instead of ἐπράθησαν, he proposes ἀπηλάθησαν—

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was reduced to little more than fourteen thousand.*

II. While under this brilliant and energetic administration, Athens was daily more and more concentrating on herself the reluctant admiration, and the growing fears of Greece, her policy towards her dependent allies involved her in a war which ultimately gave, if not a legal, at least an acknowledged, title to the pretensions she assumed. Hostilities between the new population of Miletus and the oligarchic government of Samos had been for some time carried on ; the object of contention was the city of Priene—united, apparently, with rival claims upon Anæa, a town on the coast, opposite Samos. The Milesians, unsuccessful in the war, applied to Athens for assistance. As the Samians were among the dependent allies, Pericles, in the

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the authorities from Lysias, quoted by Mr. Clinton (p. 390) seem to decide the matter. "These five thousand disfranchised citizens, in B C. 544, partly supplied the colony to Thurium in the following year, and partly contributed to augment the number of the Metœci."

* Fourteen thousand two hundred and forty, according to Philochorus. By the term 'free citizens' is to be understood those male Athenians above twenty—that is, those entitled to vote in the public assembly. According to Mr. Clinton's computation the women and children being added, the fourteen thousand two hundred and forty will amount to about fifty-eight thousand six hundred and forty, as the total of the free population.

name of the Athenian people, ordered them to refer to Athens the decision of the dispute: on their refusal, an expedition of forty galleys was conducted against them by Pericles in person. A still more plausible colour than that of the right of dictation was given to this interference; for the prayer of the Milesians was backed and sanctioned by many of the Samians themselves, oppressed by the oligarchic government which presided over them. A ridiculous assertion was made by the libellers of the comic drama, and the enemies of Pericles, that the war was undertaken at the instigation of Aspasia, with whom that minister had formed the closest connexion; but the expedition was the necessary and unavoidable result of the twofold policy by which the Athenian government invariably directed its actions; 1st, to enforce the right of ascendency over its allies; 2ndly, to replace oligarchic by democratic institutions. Nor, on this occasion, could Athens have remained neutral or supine, without materially weakening her hold upon all the states she aspired at once to democratise and to govern.

III. The fleet arrived at Samos—the oligarchic government was deposed—one hundred hostages (fifty men—fifty boys) from its partisans were taken and placed at Lemnos, and a garrison was left to secure the new constitution of the island. Some of the defeated faction took refuge on the Asiatic continent—entered into an intrigue with the Persian Pissuthnes, satrap of Sardis; and having, by continued correspondence with their friends at Samos, secured connivance at their attempt, they landed by night at Samos with a hired force of seven hundred soldiers, and succeeded in mastering the Athenian garrison, and securing the greater part of the chiefs of the new administration; while, by a secret and well-contrived plot, they regained their hostages left at Lemnos. They then openly proclaimed their independence—restored the oligarchy—and as a formal proof of defiance, surrendered to Pissuthnes the Athenians they had captured. Byzantium hastened to join the revolt. Their alliance with Pissuthnes procured the Samians the promised aid of a Phœnician fleet—and they now deemed themselves sufficiently strong to renew their hostilities with Miletus. Their plans were well laid, and their boldness made a considerable impression on the states hostile to Athens. Among the Peloponnesian allies, it was debated whether or not, despite the treaty, the Samians should be assisted: opinions were divided, but Corinth,* perhaps, turned the scale, by insisting on the right of every state to deal with its dependents. Corinth had, herself, colonies over which she desired to preserve a dictatorial sway; and she was disposed to regard the Samian revolution less as the gallantry of freemen than the enterprise of rebels. It was fortunate, too, perhaps, for Athens, that the Samian insurgents had sought their ally in the Persian satrap; nor could the Peloponnesian states at that time have decorously assisted the Persian against the Athenian arms. But short time for deliberation was left by a government which procured for the Athenians the character to be not more quick to contrive than to execute—to be the only people who could simultaneously project and acquire—and who even considered a festival but as a day on which some necessary business could be accomplished.* With a fleet of sixty sail, Pericles made for Samos; some of the vessels were stationed on the Carian coast to watch the movements of the anticipated Phœnician reinforcement; others were despatched to collect aid from Chios and Lesbos. Meanwhile, though thus reduced to forty-four sail, Pericles, near a small island called Tragia, engaged the Samian fleet returning from Miletus, consisting of seventy vessels, and gained a victory. Then, reinforced by forty galleys from Athens, and twenty-five from Lesbos and Chios, he landed on the island, defeated the Samians in a pitched battle, drove them into their city, invested it with a triple line of ramparts, and simultaneously blockaded the city by sea. The besieged were not, however, too discouraged to sally out; and under Melissus, who was at once a philosopher and a hero, they even obtained advantage in a sea-fight. But these efforts were sufficiently unimportant to permit Pericles to draw off sixty of his vessels, and steer along the Carian coast to meet the expected fleet of the Phœnicians. The besieged did not suffer the opportunity thus afforded them to escape—they surprised the naval blockading force, destroyed the guard-ships, and joining battle with the rest of the fleet, obtained a decisive victory, which B. C. 440. for fourteen days left them the mastery of the open sea, and enabled them to introduce supplies.

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* Thucyd. i. c. 40.

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* See the Speech of the Corinthians.—Thucyd. lib. i. 70.

IV. While lying in wait for the Phœnician squadron, which did not, however, make its appearance, tidings of the Samian success were brought to Pericles. He hastened back and renewed the blockade—fresh forces were sent to his aid—from Athens, forty-eight ships, under three generals, Thucydides,* Agnon, and Phormio; followed by twenty more under Tlepo-

* Who was this Thucydides? The rival of Pericles had been exiled less than ten years before;[1] and it is difficult to suppose that he could have been recalled before the expiration of the sentence, and appointed to command, at the very period when the power and influence of Pericles were at their height. Thucydides, the historian, was about thirty-one, an age at which so high a command would scarcely, at that period, have been bestowed upon any citizen, even in Athens, where men mixed in public affairs earlier than in other Hellenic states;[2] besides, had Thucydides been present, would he have given us no more ample details of an event so important? There were several who bore this name. The scholiast on Aristophanes (Acharn v. 703) says there were four, whom he distinguishes thus—1st, the historian; 2nd, the Gargettian; 3rd, the Thessalian; 4th, the son of Melesias. The scholiast on the Vespæ, (v. 991,) enumerates the same, and calls them all *Athenians*. The son of Melesias is usually supposed the opponent of Pericles—he is so called by Androtion. Theopompus, however, says that it was the son of Pantanus. Marcellinus (in vit. Thucyd. p. xi.) speaks of *many* of the name, and also selects four for special notice. 1st, the historian; 2nd, the son of Melesias; 3rd, a Pharsalian; 4th, a poet of the ward of Acherdus, mentioned by Androtion, and called the son of

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[1] In fact, about four years ago; viz. B.C. 444.

[2] Thucydides himself (lib. v. 43) speaks of Alcibiades as a mere youth, (at least, one who would have been so considered in any other state,) at a time when he could not have been much less, and was probably rather more, than thirty.

lemus and Anticles, while Chios and Lesbos supplied an additional squadron of thirty. Still the besieged were not disheartened ; they ventured another engagement, which was but an ineffectual struggle, and then, shut up within their city, stood a siege of nine months.

With all the small Greek states, it had ever been the policy of necessity, to shun even victories attended with great loss. This policy was refined by Pericles into a scientific system. In the present instance, he avoided all assaults which might weaken his forces, and preferred the loss of time to the loss of life. The tedious length of the blockade occasioned some murmurs amongst the lively and impatient forces he commanded ; but he is said to have diverted the time by the holiday devices, which in the Middle Ages often so graced and softened the rugged aspect of war. The army was divided into eight parts, and by lot it was decided which

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Ariston. Two of this name, the historian and the son of Melesias, are well-known to us ; but for the reasons I have mentioned, it is more probable that one of the others was general in the Samian war. A third Thucydides (the Thessalian, or Pharsalian) is mentioned by the historian himself, (viii. 92.) I take the Gargettian (perhaps the son of Pantanus named by Theopompus) to have been the commander in the expedition.

one of the eight divisions should, for the time, encounter the fatigues of actual service; the remaining seven passed the day in sports and feasting.* A concourse of women appear to have found their way to the encampment,† and a Samian writer ascribes to their piety or their gratitude, the subsequent erection of a temple to Venus. The siege, too, gave occasion to Pericles to make experiment of military engines, which, if invented before, probably now received mechanical improvement. Although, in the earlier contest, mutual animosities had been so keen that the prisoners on either side had been contumeliously branded,‡ it was, perhaps, the festive and easy manner in which the siege was afterwards carried on, that, mitigating the bitterness of prolonged hostilities, served to procure, at last, for the Samians articles of capitulation more than usually mild. They embraced the conditions of demolishing their fortifications, delivering up their ships, and paying by instalments a portion towards the cost of the siege.* Byzantium, which, commanding the entrance of the Euxine, was a most important possession to the Athenians,† whether for ambition or for commerce, at the same time accepted, without resistance, the terms held out to it, and became once more subject to the Athenian empire.

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* Plut. in vit. Per.

† Alexis ap. Ath. lib. xiii.

‡ At this period, the Athenians made war with a forbearance not common in later ages. When Timotheus besieged Samos he maintained his armament solely on the hostile country, while a siege of nine months cost Athens so considerable a sum.

V. On his return, Pericles was received with an enthusiasm which attested the sense entertained of the value of his conquest. He pro-

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* Plut. in vit. Per.

The contribution levied on the Samians was two hundred talents, proportioned, according to Diodorus, to the full cost of the expedition. But as Boeckh (Pol. Econ. of Athens, vol. i. p. 386, trans.) well observes, "This was a very lenient reckoning; a nine months' siege by land and sea, in which one hundred and ninety-nine triremes[1] were employed, or, at any rate, a large part of this number, for a considerable time, must evidently have caused a greater expense, and the statement, therefore, of Isocrates and Nepos, that twelve hundred talents were expended on it, appears to be by no means exaggerated."

† It was on Byzantium that they depended for the corn they imported from the shores of the Euxine.

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[1] Boeckh states the number of triremes at one hundred and ninety-nine, but, in fact, there were two hundred and fifteen vessels employed, since we ought not to omit the sixteen stationed on the Carian coast, or despatched to Lesbos and Chios for supplies.

nounced upon those who had fallen in the war a funeral oration.* When he descended from the rostrum, the women crowded round and showered fillets and chaplets on the eloquent victor. Elpinice, the sister of Cimon, alone shared not the general enthusiasm. "Are these actions," she said to Pericles, "worthy of chaplets and garlands?—actions purchased by the loss of many gallant citizens—not won against the Phœnician and the Mede, like those of Cimon, but by the ruin of a city united with ourselves in amity and origin." The ready minister replied to the invective of Elpinice by a line from Archilochus, which, in alluding to the age and coquetry of the lady, probably answered the oratorical purpose of securing the laugh on his own side.†

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* The *practice* of funeral orations was probably of very ancient origin among the Greeks: but the *law* which ordained them at Athens is referred by the Scholiast on Thucydides, (lib. ii. 35,) to Solon; while Diodorus, on the other hand, informs us it was not passed till after the battle of Platæa. It appears most probable that it was an usage of the Heroic times, which became obsolete while the little feuds among the Greek states remained trivial and unimportant; but after the Persian invasion, it was solemnly revived, from the magnitude of the wars which Greece had undergone, and the dignity and holiness of the cause in which the defenders of their country had fallen.

† *Οὐκ ἆν μύροισι γραῦς ἐοῦς ἠλείφεο.*

This seems the only natural interpretation of the line, in

While these events confirmed the authority of Athens and the Athenian government, a Power had grown up within the city that assumed a right, the grave assertion of which without the walls would have been deeply felt and bitterly resented—a Power that sate in severe and derisive judgment upon Athens herself, her laws, her liberties, her mighty generals, her learned statesmen, her poets, her sages, and her arrogant democracy—a Power that has come down to foreign nations and distant ages as armed with irresistible weapons—which now is permitted to give testimony, not only against individuals, but nations themselves, but which, in that time, was not more effective in practical results than at this day a caricature in St. James's-street, or a squib in a weekly newspaper—a Power which exposed to relentless ridicule, before the most susceptible and numerous tribunal, the loftiest names in rank, in wisdom, and in genius

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which, from not having the context, we lose whatever wit the sentence may have possessed—and witty we must suppose it was, since Plutarch evidently thinks it a capital joke. In corroboration of this interpretation of an allusion which has a little perplexed the commentators, we may observe, that ten years before, Pericles had judged a sarcasm upon the age of Elpinice the best way to silence her importunities. The anecdote is twice told by Plutarch, in vit. Cim. c. 14, and in vit. Per. c. 10.

—and which could not have deprived a beggar of his obol, or a scavenger of his office:—THE POWER OF THE COMIC MUSE.

VI. We have seen that in the early village festivals, out of which grew the tragedy of Phrynichus and Æschylus, there were, besides the Dithyramb and the Satyrs, the Phallic processions, which diversified the ceremony by the lowest jests mingled with the wildest satire. As her tragedy had its origin in the Dithyramb—as her satyric after-piece had its origin in the satyric buffooneries—so out of the Phallic processions rose the Comedy of Greece.* Susarion is asserted by some to have been a Megarian by origin; and while the democracy of Megara was yet in force, he appears to have roughly shaped the disorderly merriment of the procession into a rude farce, interspersed with the old choral songs. The close connexion between Megara and Athens soon served to communicate to the latter the improvements of Susarion; and these improvements obtained for the Megarian the title of inventor of comedy, with about the same justice as a similar degree of art conferred upon the later Thespis the distinction of the origin of tragedy. The study of Homer's epics had suggested its true province to tragedy; the study of

B.C. 562.

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* Aristot. Poet. iv.

BOOK V. CHAP. III.

the Margites, attributed also to Homer, seems to have defined and enlarged the domain of comedy. Eleven years after Phrynichus appeared, and just previous to the first effort of Æschylus, Epicharmus, who appears to have been a native of Cos,* produced at Syracuse the earliest symmetrical and systematic form of comic dialogue and fable. All accounts prove him to have been a man of extraordinary genius, and of very thoughtful and accomplished mind. Perhaps the loss of his works is not the least to be lamented of those priceless treasures which time has destroyed. So uncertain, after all, is the great tribunal of posterity, which is often as little to be relied upon as the caprice of the passing day! We have the worthless Electra of Euripides—we have lost all, save the titles and a few sententious fragments, of thirty-five comedies of Epicharmus! Yet if Horace inform us rightly, that the poet of Syracuse was the model of Plautus, perhaps in the Amphitryon we can trace the vein and genius of the father of true comedy; and the thoughts and the plot of the

B.C. 500.

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* "As he was removed from Cos in infancy, the name of his adopted country prevailed over that of the country of his birth, and Epicharmus is called of Syracuse, though born at Cos, as Apollonius is called the Rhodian, though born at Alexandria."—Fast. Hell. vol. ii. introduction.

lost Epicharmus may still exist, mutilated and disguised, in the humours of the greatest comic poet* of modern Europe.

VII. It was chiefly from the rich stores of mythology that Epicharmus drew his fables; but what was sublimity with the tragic poet, was burlesque with the comic. He parodied the august personages and venerable adventures of the gods of the Greek Pantheon. By a singular coincidence, like his contemporary Æschylus,† he was a Pythagorean, and it is wonderful to observe how rapidly and how powerfully the influence of the mysterious Samian operated on the most original intellects of the age. The familiar nature of the Hellenic religion sanctioned, even in the unphilosophical age of Homer, a treatment of celestial persons that to our modern notions would, at first glance, evince a disrespect for the religion itself. But wherever homage to "dead men" be admitted, we may, even in our own times, find that the

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* Molière.

† Laertius viii. For it is evident that Epicharmus, the philosopher, was no other than Epicharmus, the philosophical poet—the delight of Plato, who was himself half a Pythagorean.—See Bentley, Diss. Phal. p. 201; Laertius, viii. 78; Fynes Clinton, Fast. Hell. vol. ii., introduction, p. 36, (note *g*.)

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most jocular legends are attached to names held in the most reverential awe. And he who has listened to an Irish or an Italian Catholic's familiar stories of some favourite saint, may form an adequate notion of the manner in which a pious Greek could jest upon Bacchus to-day—and sacrifice to Bacchus to-morrow. With his mythological travesties the Pythagorean mingled, apparently, many earnest maxims of morality,* and though not free, in the judgment of Aristotle, from a vice of style usually common only to ages the most refined;† he was yet proverbial, even in the most polished period of Grecian letters, for the graces of his diction and the happy choice of his expressions.

Chionides B.C. 487.

Phormis, a contemporary of Epicharmus, flourished also at Syracuse, and though sometimes classed with Epicharmus, and selecting his materials from the same source, his claims to reputation are immeasurably more equivocal. Dinolochus continued the Sicilian school, and was a contemporary of the first Athenian comic writer.

VIII. Hence it will be seen that the origin of comedy does not rest with the Athenians; that Megara, if the birth-place of Susarion, may fairly claim whatever merit belongs to the first rude improvement, and that Syracuse is entitled to the higher distinction of raising humour into art. So far is comedy the offspring of the Dorians—not the Dorians of a sullen oligarchy, with whom to vary an air of music was a crime—not the Dorians of Lacedæmon—but of Megara and Syracuse—of an energetic, though irregular democracy — of a splendid, though illegitimate monarchy.*

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* A few of his plays were apparently not mythological, but they were only exceptions from the general rule, and might have been written after the less refining comedies of Magnes at Athens.

† A love of false antithesis.

But the comedy of Epicharmus was not altogether the old comedy of Athens. The last, as bequeathed to us by Aristophanes, has features which bear little family resemblance to the philosophical parodies of the Pythagorean poet. It does not confine itself to mythological subjects—it avoids the sententious style—it does not preach, but ridicule, philosophy—it plunges amidst the great practical business of men—it breathes of the Agora and the Piræus—it is not a laughing sage, but a bold, boisterous, gigantic, demagogue, ever in the thickest mob of human interests, and wielding all the various humours of a democracy with a brilliant audacity, and that reckless ease which is the proof of its astonishing power.

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* In Syracuse, however, the republic existed when Epicharmus first exhibited his comedies. His genius was therefore formed by a republic, though afterwards fostered by a tyranny.

XI. Chionides was the first Athenian comic writer. We find him before the public three years after the battle of Marathon, when the final defeat of Hippias confirmed the stability of the republic; and when the improvements of Æschylus in tragedy served to communicate new attractions to the comic stage. Magnes, a writer of great wit, and long popular, closely followed, and the titles of some of the plays of these writers confirm the belief that Attic comedy, from its commencement, took other ground than that occupied by the mythological burlesques of Epicharmus. So great was the impetus given to the new art, that a crowd of writers followed simultaneously, whose very names it is wearisome to mention. Of these the most eminent were Cratinus and Crates. The earliest *recorded* play of Cratinus, though he must have exhibited many before,* appeared the year prior to the death of

The Archilochi of Cratinus B.C. 448.

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* For Crates acted in the plays of Cratinus before he turned author. (See next p.) Now the first play of Crates dates two years *before* the first recorded play (the Archilochi) of Cratinus consequently Cratinus must have been celebrated long previous to the exhibition of the Archilochi—indeed, his earlier

Cimon. Plutarch quotes some lines from this author, which allude to the liberality of Cimon with something of that patron-loving spirit which was rather the characteristic of a Roman than an Athenian poet. Though he himself, despite his age, was proverbially of no very abstemious or decorous habits, Cratinus was unsparing in his attacks upon others, and wherever he found or suspected vice, he saw a subject worthy of his genius. He was admired to late posterity, and by Roman critics, for the grace, and even for the grandeur of his hardy verses, and Quinctilian couples him with Eupolis and Aristophanes as models for the formation of orators. Crates appeared two years before the first *recorded* play of Cratinus. He had previously been an actor, and performed the principal characters in the plays of Cratinus. Aristophanes bestows on him the rare honour of his praise, while he sarcastically reminds the Athenian audience of the ill reception that so ingenious a poet often received at their hands. Yet, despite the excellence of the earlier comic writers, they had hitherto at Athens very sparingly adopted the artistical graces of Epichar-

Crates exhibits B.C. 451.

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plays appear, according to Aristophanes, to have been the most successful, until the old gentleman, by a last vigorous effort, beat the favourite play of Aristophanes himself.

mus. Crates, who did not write before the five years' truce with Sparta, is said by Aristotle not only to have been the first who abandoned the Iambic form of comedy, but the first *Athenian* who invented systematic fable or plot—a strong argument to show how little the Athenian borrowed from the Sicilian comedy, since, if the last had been its source of inspiration, the invented stories of Epicharmus—(by half a century the predecessor of Crates)—would naturally have been the most striking improvement to be imitated. The Athenian comedy did not receive the same distinctions conferred upon tragedy. So obscure was its rise to its later eminence, that even Aristotle could not determine when, or by whom, the various progressive improvements were made: and, regarded with jealous or indifferent eyes by the magistrature as an exhibition given by private competitors, nor calling for the protection of the state which it often defied, it was long before its chorus was defrayed at the public cost.

Under Cratinus and Crates,* however, in the year of the Samian war, the comic drama assumed a character, either so personally scurrilous, or so politically dangerous, that a decree was passed interdicting its exhibitions. The law was repealed three years afterwards.* Viewing its temporary enforcement, and the date in which it was passed, it appears highly probable that the critical events of the Samian expedition may have been the cause of the decree. At such a time the opposition of the comic writers might have been considered dangerous. With the increased stability of the state the law was, perhaps, deemed no longer necessary. And from the recommencement of the comic drama we may probably date both the improvements of Crates, and the special protection of the state;

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* That the magistrature did not at first authorise comedy seems a proof that it was not at the commencement considered, like tragedy—of a religious character. And, indeed, though modern critics constantly urge upon us its connexion with

Comedy interdicted B.C. 440.

Decree repealed B.C. 437.

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religion, I doubt whether at any time the populace thought more of its holier attributes and associations than the Neapolitans of to-day are impressed with the sanctity of the carnival when they are throwing sugar-plums at each other.

* In the interval, however, the poets seem to have sought to elude the law, since the names of two plays (the Σατυροι and the Κολεοφοροι) are recorded during this period—plays which probably approached comedy without answering to its legal definition. It might be that the difficulty rigidly to enforce the law against the spirit of the times and the inclination of the people was one of the causes that led to the repeal of the prohibition.

for when, for the first time, Comedy was formally authorised by the law, it was natural that the law should recognise the privileges it claimed in common with its sister Tragedy. There is no authority for supposing that Pericles, whose calm temper and long novitiate in the stormy career of public life, seem to have rendered him callous to public abuse, was the author of this decree. It is highly probable indeed that he was absent at the siege of Samos* when it was passed; but he was the object of such virulent attacks by the comic poets that we might consider them actuated by some personal feeling of revenge and spleen, were it not evident that Cratinus at least (and probably Crates, his disciple,) was attached to the memory of Cimon, and could not fail to be hostile to the principles and government of Cimon's successor. So far at this period had Comedy advanced; but, in the background, obscure and undreamed of, was one, yet in childhood, destined to raise the Comic to the rank of the Tragic Muse;—one who, perhaps, from his earliest youth, was incited by the noisy fame of his predecessors, and the desire of that glorious, but often perverted power, so palpable and so exultant, which rides the stormy waves of popular applause.* About thirteen years after the brief prohibition of comedy appeared that wonderful genius, the elements and attributes of whose works it will be a pleasing, if arduous task, in due season, to analyse and define;—matchless alike in delicacy and strength, in powers the most gigantic, in purpose the most daring—with the invention of Shakspeare—the playfulness of Rabelais—the malignity of Swift,—need I add the name of Aristophanes?

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* Since that siege lasted nine months of the year in which the decree was made.

XI. But while Comedy had thus progressed to its first invidious dignity, that of proscription, far different was the reward that awaited the present representative and master of the tragic school. In the year that the muse of Cratinus was silenced, Sophocles was appointed one of the colleagues with Pericles in the Samian war.

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* Aristophanes thus vigorously describes the applauses that attended the earlier productions of Cratinus. I quote from the masterly translation of Mr. Mitchell.

"Who Cratinus may forget, or the storm of whim and wit,
Which shook theatres under his guiding;
When Panegyric's song poured her flood of praise along,
Who but he on the top wave was riding?"

. . . . .

. . . . .

"His step was as the tread of a flood that leaves its bed,
And his march it was rude desolation," &c.

Mitchell's Aristoph. The Knights, p. 204.

The man who wrote thus must have felt betimes—when, as a boy, he first heard the roar of the audience—what it is to rule the humours of eighteen thousand spectators!

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRAGEDIES OF SOPHOCLES.

BOOK V. CHAP. IV.

I. It was in the very nature of the Athenian drama, that, when once established, it should concentrate and absorb almost every variety of the poetical genius. The old lyrical poetry, never much cultivated in Athens, ceased in a great measure when tragedy arose, or rather, tragedy was the complete developement, the new and perfected consummation, of the Dithyrambic ode. Lyrical poetry transmigrated into the choral song, as the epic merged into the dialogue and plot, of the Drama. Thus, when we speak of Athenian poetry, we speak of Dramatic poetry—they were one and the same. As Helvetius has so luminously shown,* genius ever turns towards that quarter in which fame shines brightest, and hence, in every age, there will be a sympathetic connexion between the taste of the public and the direction of talent—

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* De l'Esprit, passim.

Now in Athens, where audiences were numerous, and readers few,—every man who felt within himself the inspiration of the poet, would necessarily desire to see his poetry put into action—assisted with all the pomp of spectacle and music, hallowed by the solemnity of a religious festival, and breathed, by artists elaborately trained to heighten the eloquence of words, into the reverent ear of assembled Greece.

Hence the multitude of dramatic poets, hence the mighty fertility of each;—hence the life and activity of this—the comparative torpor and barrenness of every other—species of poetry. To add to the pre-eminence of the art, the applauses of the many were sanctioned by the critical canons of the few. The drama was not only the most alluring form which the divine Spirit could assume—but it was also deemed the loftiest and the purest; and when Aristotle ranked* the tragic higher than even the epic Muse, he probably did but explain the reasons for a preference which the generality of critics were disposed to accord to her.†

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* De Poet. c. 26.

† The oracle that awarded to Socrates the superlative degree of wisdom, gave to Sophocles the positive, and to Euripides the comparative, degree.

II. The career of the most majestic of the Greek poets—was eminently felicitous. His birth was noble, his fortune affluent; his natural gifts were the rarest which nature bestows on man, genius and beauty. All the care which the age permitted was lavished on his education. For his feet even the ordinary obstacles in the path of distinction were smoothed away. He entered life under auspices the most propitious and poetical. At the age of sixteen, he headed the youths who performed the triumphant pæan round the trophy of Salamis. At twenty-five, when the bones of Theseus were borne back to Athens, in the galley of the victorious Cimon, he exhibited his first play, and won the prize from Æschylus. That haughty genius, whether indignant at the success of a younger rival, or at a trial for impiety before the Areopagus, to which, (though acquitted,) he was subjected, or at the rapid ascendency of a popular party, that he seems to have scorned with the disdain at once of an Eupatrid and a Pythagorean, soon after retired from Athens to the Syracusan court; and though

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Σοφὸς Σοφοκλῆς· σοφώτερος δ'Ευριπίδης·
'Ανδρῶν δὲ πάντων Σωκράτης σοφώτατυς.

Sophocles is wise, —Euripides wiser,—but wisest of all men is Socrates.

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he thence sent some of his dramas to the Athenian stage,* the absent veteran could not but excite less enthusiasm than the young aspirant, whose artful and polished genius was more in harmony with the reigning taste than the vast but rugged grandeur of Æschylus, who, perhaps from the impossibility tangibly and visibly to body forth his shadowy Titans and obscure sublimity of design, does not appear to have obtained a popularity on the stage equal to his celebrity as a poet.† For three-and-sixty years did Sophocles continue to exhibit; twenty times he obtained the first prize, and he is said never to have been degraded to the third. The ordinary persecutions of envy itself seem to have spared this fortunate poet. Although his moral character was far from pure;‡ and even in extreme old age he sought after the pleasures of his youth,* yet his excesses apparently met with a remarkable indulgence from his contemporaries. To him were known neither the mortifications of Æschylus, nor the relentless mockery heaped upon Euripides. On his fair name the terrible Aristophanes himself affixes no brand.† The sweetness of his genius extended indeed to his temper, and personal popularity assisted his public triumphs. Nor does he appear to have keenly shared the party animosities of his day; his serenity, like that of Goethe, has in it something of enviable rather than honourable indifference. He owed his first distinction to Cimon, —and he served afterwards under Pericles;—on his entrance into life, he led the youths that circled the trophy of Grecian freedom—and on the verge of death, we shall hereafter see him calmly assent to the surrender of Athenian liberties. In short, Aristophanes perhaps mingled more truth than usual with his wit, when even in the shades below, he says of Sophocles,

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* The Oresteia.

† For out of seventy plays by Æschylus only thirteen were successful; and the very law passed in honour of his memory, that a chorus should be granted to any poet who chose to re-exhibit his dramas, seems to indicate that a little encouragement of such exhibition was requisite. This is still more evident if we believe with Quinctilian, that the poets who exhibited, were permitted to correct and polish up the dramas to meet the modern taste, and play the Cibber to the Athenian Shakspeare.

‡ Athenæus, lib. xiii. pp. 603, 604.

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[*] He is reported indeed, to have said that he rejoiced in the old age which delivered him from a severe and importunate task-master.—Athen. lib. 12. p. 510. But the poet, nevertheless, appears to have retained his amorous *propensities*, at least, to the last.—See Athenæus lib. 13. p. 523.

[†] He does, it is true, charge Sophocles with avarice, but he atones for it very handsomely in the 'Frogs.'

"He was contented here—he's contented there." A disposition thus facile, united with an admirable genius, will, not unoften, effect a miracle, and reconcile prosperity with fame.*

At the age of fifty-seven, Sophocles was appointed, as I before said,† to a command, as one of the ten generals in the Samian war; but history is silent as to his military genius.‡ In later life we shall again have occasion to refer to him, condemned as he was to illustrate, (after a career of unprecedented brilliancy—nor ever subjected to the caprice of the common public,) the melancholy moral inculcated by himself,§ and so often obtruded upon us by the dramatists of his country, 'never to deem a man happy till death itself denies the hazard of reverses.' Out of the vast, though not accurately known, number of the dramas of Sophocles, seven remain.

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* M. Schlegel is pleased to indulge in one of his most declamatory rhapsodies upon the life, 'so dear to the Gods', of this 'pious and holy poet.' But Sophocles, in private life, was a profligate, and in public life a shuffler and a trimmer, if not absolutely a renegade. It was perhaps the very laxity of his principles which made him thought so agreeable a fellow. At least, such is no uncommon cause of personal popularity now-a-days. People lose much of their anger and envy of genius, when it throws them down a bundle or two of human foibles by which they can climb up to its level.

† It is said, indeed, that the appointment was the reward of a successful tragedy; it was more likely due to his birth, fortune, and personal popularity.

‡ It seems, however, that Pericles thought very meanly of his warlike capacities.—See Athenæus, lib. 13, p. 604.

§ Œdip. Tyr. 1529, &c.

III. A great error has been committed by those who class Æschylus and Sophocles together as belonging to the same era, and refer both to the age of Pericles, because each was living while Pericles was in power. We may as well class Dr. Johnson and Lord Byron in the same age, because both lived in the reign of George III. The Athenian rivals were formed under the influences of very different generations; and if Æschylus lived through a considerable portion of the career of the younger Sophocles, the accident of longevity by no means warrants us to consider them the children of the same age, — the creatures of the same influences. Æschylus belonged to the race and the period from which emerged Themistocles and Aristides —Sophocles to those which produced Phidias and Pericles. Sophocles indeed, in the calmness of his disposition, and the symmetry and stateliness of his genius, might almost be entitled the Pericles of Poetry. And as the statesman was called the Olympian, not from the headlong vehemence, but the serene majesty of his strength;

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so of Sophocles also it may be said, that his power is visible in his repose, and his thunders roll from the depth of a clear sky.

IV. The Age of Pericles is the Age of Art.* It was not Sophocles alone that was an artist in that time; he was but one of the many who, in every department, sought, in study and in science, the secrets of the Wise or the Beautiful. Pericles and Phidias were in their several paths of fame what Sophocles was in his. But it was not the art of an emasculate or effeminate period—it grew out of the example of a previous generation of men astonishingly great. It was Art still fresh from the wells of Nature. Art with a vast field yet unexplored, and in all its youthful vigour and maiden enthusiasm. There was, it is true, at a period a little later than that in which the genius of Sophocles was formed, one class of students among whom a false taste and a spurious refinement were already visible—the class of rhetoricians and philosophical speculators. For in fact, the art which belongs to the imagination is often purest in an early age; but that which appertains to the reason and intellect is slow before it attains mature strength and manly judgment. Amongst these students was early trained and tutored the thoughtful mind of Euripides; —and hence that art which in Sophocles was learned in more miscellaneous and active circles, and moulded by a more powerful imagination, in Euripides often sickens us with the tricks of a pleader, the quibbles of a schoolman, or the dulness of a moralising declaimer. But as, in the peculiar attributes and character of his writings, Euripides somewhat forestalled his age,—as his example had a very important influence upon his successors,—as he did not exhibit till the fame of Sophocles was already confirmed,—and as his name is intimately associated with the later age of Aristophanes and Socrates,—it may be more convenient to confine our critical examination at present to the tragedies of Sophocles.

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* When Sophocles (Athenæus. i. p. 22,) said that Æschylus composed befittingly, but without knowing it, his saying evinced the study his compositions had cost himself.

Although the three plays of the 'Œdipus Tyrannus,' the 'Œdipus at Colonos,' and the 'Antigone,' were composed and exhibited at very wide intervals of time, yet from their connexion with each other, they may almost be said to form one poem. The 'Antigone,' which concludes the story, was the one earliest written; and there are passages in either 'Œdipus' which seem composed to lead up as it were to the catastrophe of the 'Antigone,' and form an harmonious link between the several dramas. These three plays constitute, on the whole, the greatest performance of Sophocles, though in detached parts they are equalled by passages in the 'Ajax' and the 'Philoctetes.'

V. The 'Œdipus Tyrannus' opens thus. An awful pestilence devastates Thebes. Œdipus, the king, is introduced to us, powerful and beloved: to him whose wisdom had placed him on the throne, look up the priest and the suppliants, for a remedy even amidst the terrors of the plague. Œdipus informs them that he has despatched Creon (the brother of his wife Jocasta,) to the Pythian God to know by what expiatory deed the city might be delivered from its curse. Scarce has he concluded, when Creon himself enters, and announces 'glad tidings' in the explicit answer of the oracle. The God has declared that a pollution had been bred in the land, and must be expelled the city,—that Laius, the former king, had been murdered,—and that his blood must be avenged. Laius had left the city, never to return; of his train but one man escaped, to announce his death by assassins. Œdipus instantly resolves to prosecute the inquiry into the murder, and orders the people to be summoned. The suppliants rise from the altar, and a solemn chorus of the senators of

Thebes, (in one of the most splendid lyrics of Sophocles,) chaunt the terrors of the plague—'*that unarmed Mars*,'—and implore the protection of the divine Averters of Destruction. Œdipus then, addressing the chorus, demands their aid to discover the murderer, whom he solemnly excommunicates, and dooms, deprived of aid and intercourse, to waste slowly out a miserable existence; nay, if the assassin should have sought refuge in the royal halls, there too shall the vengeance be wreaked, and the curse fall.

"For I," continues Œdipus,

"I, who the sceptre which he wielded, wield;—
I, who have mounted to his marriage bed;—
I, in whose children (had he issue known)
His would have claimed a common brotherhood;—
Now that the Evil Fate hath fallen o'er him,
I am the heir of that dead king's revenge,
Not less than if these lips had hailed him 'father!'"

A few more sentences introduce to us the old soothsayer, Tiresias,—for whom, at the instigation of Creon, Œdipus had sent. The seer answers the adjuration of the king with a thrilling and ominous burst—

"Woe—woe!—how fearful is the gift of wisdom,
When to the wise it bears no blessing!—Woe!"

The haughty spirit of Œdipus breaks forth at the gloomy and obscure warnings of the prophet. His remonstrances grow into threats. In his blindness he even accuses Tiresias himself of the murder of Laius—and out speaks the terrible diviner :

> " Ay—is it so ! Abide then by thy curse
> And solemn edict,—never from this day
> Hold human commune with these men or me ;
> Lo, where thou standest—lo the land's Polluter !"

A dialogue of great dramatic power ensues.—Œdipus accuses Tiresias of abetting his kinsman, Creon, by whom he had been persuaded to send for the soothsayer, in a plot against his throne—and the seer, who explains nothing and threatens all things—departs with a dim and fearful prophecy.

After a song from the Chorus, in which are embodied the doubt, the trouble, the terror which the audience may begin to feel—and here it may be observed, that with Sophocles the chorus always carries on, not the physical, but the moral, progress of the drama*—Creon enters, informed of the suspicion against himself, which Œdipus had expressed. Œdipus, whose whole spirit is disturbed by the weird and dark threats of Tiresias, repeats the accusation, but wildly and feebly. His vain worldly wisdom suggests to him that Creon would scarcely have asked him to consult Tiresias, nor Tiresias have ventured on denunciations so tremendous, had not the two conspired against him: yet a mysterious awe invades him—he presses questions on Creon relative to the murder of Laius, and seems more anxious to acquit himself than accuse another.

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* " The chorus should be considered as one of the persons in the drama, should be a part of the whole, and a sharer in the action, not as in Euripides, but as in Sophocles."—Aristot. de Poet. Twining's translation. But even in Sopho-

While the princes contend, the queen, Jocasta, enters. She chides their quarrel, learns from Œdipus that Tiresias had accused him of the murder of the deceased king, and, to convince him of the falseness of prophetic lore, declares that long since it was predicted, that Laius should be murdered by his son—joint-offspring of Jocasta and himself. Yet, in order to frustrate the prophecy, the only son of Laius had been exposed to perish upon solitary and untrodden mountains, while, in after years, Laius himself had

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cles, at least in such of his plays as are left to us, the chorus rarely, if ever, is a sharer in the outward and positive action of the piece; it rather carries on and expresses the progress of the emotions that spring out of the action.

fallen, in a spot where three roads met, by the hand of a stranger; so that the prophecy had not come to pass.

At this declaration, terror seizes upon Œdipus . . He questions Jocasta eagerly and rapidly —the place where the murder happened, the time in which it occurred, the age and personal appearance of Laius—and when he learns all, his previous arrogant conviction of innocence deserts him; and as he utters a hurried exclamation,—Jocasta fixes her eyes upon him, and "shudders as she gazes."* He inquires what train accompanied Laius,—learns that there were five persons; that but one escaped; that on his return to Thebes, seeing Œdipus on the throne, the survivor had besought the favour to retire from the city. Œdipus orders this witness of the murder to be sent for, and then proceeds to relate his own history. He has been taught to believe that Polybus of Corinth, and Merope of Doris, were his parents. But once at a banquet he was charged with being a supposititious child; the insult galled him, and he went to Delphi to consult the oracle. It was predicted to him that he should commit incest with his mother, and that his father should fall by his hand. Appalled and horror-stricken, he resolves to fly the possible fulfilment of the prophecy, and return no more to Corinth. In his flight, by the triple road described by Jocasta, he meets an old man in a chariot, with a guide or herald and other servitors. They attempt to thrust him from the road—a contest ensues—he slays the old man and his train. Could this be Laius? Can it be to the marriage couch of the man he slew that he has ascended? No, his fears are too credulous!—He clings to a straw; the herdsman who had escaped the slaughter of Laius and his attendants may prove that it was *not* the king whom *he* encountered. Jocasta sustains this hope—she cannot believe a prophecy—for it had been foretold that Laius should fall by the hand of his son, and that son had long since perished on the mountains. The queen and Œdipus retire within their palace; the Chorus resume their strains; after which, Jocasta reappears on her way to the temple of Apollo to offer sacrifice and prayer. At this time a messenger arrives to announce to Œdipus the death of Polybus, and the wish of the Corinthians to elect Œdipus to the throne! At these tidings Jocasta is overjoyed.

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* —ὀκνῶ τοι πρός σ' ἀποσκοποῦσ' ἄναξ.—Œdip. Tyr. 746. This line shows how much of emotion the actor could express in spite of the mask.

"Predictions of the Gods, where are ye now?
Lest by the son's doomed hand the sire should fall,
The son became a wanderer on the earth,
Lo, not the son, but Nature, gives the blow!"

Œdipus, summoned to the messenger, learns the news of his supposed father's death! It is a dread and tragic thought, but the pious Œdipus is *glad* that his father is no more, since he himself is thus saved from parricide; yet the other part of the prediction haunts him. His mother!—she yet lives. He reveals to the messenger the prophecy, and his terror. To cheer him, the messenger now informs him that he is *not* the son of Merope and Polybus. A babe had been found in the entangled forest-dells of Cithæron by a herdsman and slave of Laius—he had given the infant to another—that other, the messenger who now tells the tale. Transferred to the care of Polybus and Merope, the babe became to them as a son, for they were childless. Jocasta hears—stunned and speechless—till Œdipus, yet unconscious of the horrors still to come, turns to demand of her, if she knew the herdsman who had found the child. Then she gasps wildly out—

"Whom speaks he of? Be silent—heed it not—
Blot it out from thy memory!—it is evil!

Œdipus. It cannot be—the clue is here—and I
Will trace it through that labyrinth—my birth.—
Jocasta. By all the Gods I warn thee; for the sake
Of thine own life, beware; it is enough
For me to hear and madden!"

Œdipus (suspecting only that the pride of his queen revolts from the thought of her husband's birth being proved base and servile) replies,

"Nay, nay, cheer thee!
Were I through three descents threefold a slave,
My shame would not touch thee.
Jocasta. I do implore thee,
This once obey me—this once.
Œdipus. I will not!
To truth I grope my way.
Jocasta. And yet what love
Speaks in my voice! Thine ignorance is thy bliss.
Œdipus. A bliss that tortures!
Jocasta. Miserable man!
Oh could'st thou never learn the thing thou art!
Œdipus. Will no one quicken this slow herdsman's steps!
The unquestioned birthright of a royal name
Let this proud queen possess!—
Jocasta. Woe! woe! thou wretch!
Woe! my last word!—words are no more for me!"

With this Jocasta rushes from the scene. Still Œdipus misconstrues her warning; he ascribes her fears to the royalty of her spirit. For himself, *Fortune* was his mother, and had blest him;—nor could the accident of birth destroy his inheritance from nature. The Chorus give way to their hopes! their wise, their glorious Œdipus, might have been born a *Theban!* The herdsman enters: like Tiresias, he is loth to speak. The fiery king extorts his secret. Œdipus is the son of Laius and Jocasta—at his birth the terrible prophecies of the Pythian induced his own mother to expose him on the mountains—the compassion of the herdsman saved him—saved him to become the bridegroom of his mother, the assassin of his sire. The astonishing art with which, from step to step, the audience and the victim are led to the climax of the discovery, is productive of an interest of pathos and of terror, which is not equalled by the greatest masterpieces of the modern stage,* and possesses that species of anxious excitement which is wholly unparalleled in the ancient. The discovery is the true catastrophe—the physical denouement is but an adjunct to the moral one. Jocasta, on quitting the scene, had passed straight to the bridal-chamber, and there, by the couch from which had sprung a double and accursed progeny, perished by her own hands. Meanwhile, the predestined parricide, bursting into the chamber, beheld, as the last object on earth, the corpse of his wife and mother! Once more Œdipus re-appears, barred for ever from the light of day. In the fury of his remorse, he "had smote the balls of his own eyes," and the wise baffler of the sphinx, Œdipus, the haughty, the insolent, the illustrious, is a forlorn and despairing outcast. But amidst all the horror of the concluding scene, a beautiful and softening light breaks forth. Blind, powerless, excommunicated, Creon, whom Œdipus accused of murder, has now become his judge and his master. The great spirit, crushed beneath its intolerable woes, is humbled to the dust; and the 'wisest of mankind' implores but two favours—to be thrust from the land an exile, and once more to embrace his children. Even in translation the exquisite tenderness of this passage cannot altogether fail of its effect.

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* "Of all *discoveries*, the best is that which arises from the action itself, and in which a striking effect is produced by probable incidents. Such is that in the Œdipus of Sophocles."—Aristot. de Poet., Twining's Trans.

"For *my* fate, let it pass! My children, Creon!
My sons—nay, they the bitter wants of life

May master—*they* are MEN!—my *girls*—my darlings—
Why, never sate I at my household board
Without their blessed looks—our very bread
We brake together;—thou'lt be kind to them
For my sake, Creon—and, (O latest prayer!)
Let me but touch them—feel them with these hands.
And pour such sorrow as may speak farewell
O'er ills that must be theirs! By thy pure line—
For thine is pure—do this, sweet prince. Methinks
I should not miss these eyes, could I but touch them.
What shall I say to move thee?
Sobs!—And do I,
Oh do I hear my sweet ones? Hast thou sent,
In mercy sent, my children to my arms?
Speak—speak—I do not dream!
Creon. They are thy children,
I would not shut thee from the dear delight
In the old time they gave thee.
Œdipus. Blessings on thee!
For this one mercy mayst thou find above
A kinder God than I have. Ye—where are ye?
My children—come!—nearer and nearer yet," &c.

The pathos of this scene is continued to the end; and the very last words Œdipus utters, as his children cling to him, implore that they at least, may not be torn away.

It is in this concluding scene, that the art of the play is consummated; the horrors of the catastrophe, which, if a last impression, would have left behind a too painful and gloomy feeling, are softened down by this beautiful resort to the tenderest and holiest sources of emotion. And the pathos is rendered doubly effective, not only from the immediate contrast of the terror that preceded it, but from the masterly skill with which all display of the softer features in the character of Œdipus is reserved to the close. In the breaking up of the strong mind and the daring spirit, when empire, honour, name, are all annihilated, the heart is seen, as it were, surviving the wrecks around it, and clinging for support to the Affections.

VI. In the 'Œdipus at Colonos,' the blind king is presented to us, after the lapse of years, a wanderer over the earth, unconsciously taking his refuge in the grove of the Furies*—" the awful

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* But the spot consecrated to those deities which men "tremble to name," presents all the features of outward loveliness that contrast and refine, as it were, the metaphysical terror of the associations. And the beautiful description of Colonos itself, which is the passage that Sophocles is said to have read to his judges, before whom he was accused of dotage, seems to paint a home more fit for the Graces than the Furies. The Chorus inform the stranger that he has come to "the white Colonos;"

BOOK V. CHAP. IV.

goddesses, daughters of Earth and Darkness." His young daughter, Antigone, one of the most lovely creations of poetry, is his companion and guide; he is afterwards joined by his other daughter, Ismene, whose weak and selfish character is drawn in strong contrast to the heroism and devotion of Antigone. The ancient prophe-

" Where ever and aye, through the greenest vale,
Gush the wailing notes of the nightingale
From her home where the dark-hued ivy weaves
With the grove of the God a night of leaves;
And the vines blossom out from the lonely glade,
And the suns of the summer are dim in the shade,
And the storms of the winter have never a breeze,
That can shiver a leaf from the charmed trees,
For there, O ever there,
With that fair Mountain Throng,
Who his sweet nurses were,[1]
Wild Bacchus holds his court, the conscious woods among!
Daintily, ever there,
Crown of the mighty goddesses of old,
Clustering Narcissus with his glorious hues
Springs from his bath of heaven's delicious dews,
And the gay crocus sheds his rays of gold.

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[1] The nymphs of Nisa.

cies that foretold his woes, had foretold also his release. His last shelter and resting-place were to be obtained from the Dread Deities, and a sign of thunder, or earthquake, or lightning, was to announce his parting hour. Learning the spot to which his steps had been guided, Œdipus solemnly feels that his doom approaches: thus at the very opening of the poem, he stands before us on the verge of a mysterious grave.

The sufferings which have bowed the parricide to a premature old age,* have not crushed his

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And wandering there for ever,
The fountains are at play,
And Cephisus feeds his river
From their sweet urns, day by day.
The river knows no dearth ;
Adown the vale the lapsing waters glide,
And the pure rain of that pellucid tide
Calls the rife beauty from the heart of earth ;
While by the banks the Muses' choral train
Are duly heard—and there, Love checks her golden
rein."

* γέροντα δ'ὀρθοῦν, φλαῦρον, ὃς νέος πέσῃ.

Œdip. Col. 396.

Thus, though his daughter had only grown up from childhood to early womanhood, Œdipus has passed from youth to age since the date of the Œdipus Tyrannus.

spirit; the softness and self-humiliation which were the first results of his awful affliction, are past away. He is grown once more vehement and passionate, from the sense of wrong; remorse still visits him, but is alternated with the yet more human feeling of resentment at the unjust severity of his doom.* His sons, who, 'by a word,' might have saved him from the expulsion, penury, and wanderings he has undergone, had deserted his cause—had looked with indifferent eyes on his awful woes—had joined with Creon to expel him from the Theban land. They are the Goneril and Regan of the classic Lear, as Antigone is the Cordelia on whom he leans—a Cordelia he has never thrust from him. "When," says Œdipus, in stern bitterness of soul,

"When my soul boiled within me—when 'to die'
Was all my prayer—and death was sweetness,—yea,
Had they but stoned me like a dog, I'd bless'd them;
Then no man rose against me—but when time
Brought its slow comfort—when my wounds were scarred—
All my griefs mellow'd, and remorse itself
Judged my self-penance mightier than my sins,
Thebes thrust me from her breast, and they, my sons,

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* See his self-justification, 960—1000.

My blood, mine offspring, from their father shrunk:
A word of theirs had saved me—one small word—
They said it not—and lo! the wandering beggar!"

In the meanwhile, during the exile of Œdipus, strife had broken out between the brothers: Eteocles, here represented as the younger, drove out Polynices, and seized the throne; Polynices takes refuge at Argos, where he prepares war against the usurper; an oracle declares that success shall be with that party which Œdipus joins, and a mysterious blessing is pronounced on the land which contains his bones. Thus, the possession of this wild tool of Fate—raised up in age to a dread and ghastly consequence—becomes the argument of the play, as his death must become the catastrophe. It is the deep and fierce revenge of Œdipus that makes the passion of the whole. According to a sublime conception, we see before us the physical Œdipus in the lowest state of destitution and misery—in rags, blindness, beggary, utter and abject impotence. But in the moral Œdipus is all the majesty of a power still royal. The oracle has invested one, so fallen and so wretched in himself, with the power of a god—the power to confer victory on the cause he adopts, prosperity on the land that becomes his tomb. With all the revenge of age, all the grand malignity of hatred, he clings to this shadow and relic of a sceptre. Creon, aware of the oracle, comes to recal him to Thebes. The treacherous kinsman humbles himself before his victim—he is the suppliant of the beggar, who defies and spurns him. Creon avenges himself by seizing on Antigone and Ismene. Nothing can be more dramatically effective than the scene in which these last props of his age are torn from the desolate old man. They are ultimately restored to him by Theseus, whose amiable and lofty character is painted with all the partial glow of colouring which an Athenian poet would naturally lavish on the Athenian Alfred. We are next introduced to Polynices. He, like Creon, has sought Œdipus with the selfish motive of recovering his throne by means of an ally, to whom the oracle promises victory. But there is in Polynices the appearance of a true penitence, and a mingled gentleness and majesty in his bearing which interest us in his fate, despite his faults, and which were possibly intended by Sophocles to give a new interest to the plot of the 'Antigone,' composed and exhibited long before. Œdipus is persuaded by the benevolence of Theseus, and the sweet intercession of Antigone, to admit his son. After a chaunt from the Chorus on the ills of old age,* Polynices enters. He is struck with the wasted and miserable appearance of the old man, and bitterly reproaches his own desertion.

"But since," he says, with almost a christian sentiment,—

> "Since o'er each deed, upon the Olympian throne,
> Mercy sits joint presider with great Jove,—
> Let her, O father, also take her stand,
> Within thy soul—and judge me! The past sins
> Yet have their cure—ah, would they had recal!
> Why are you voiceless? Speak to me, my father!
> Turn not away—will you not answer me?" &c.

Œdipus retains his silence in spite of the prayers of his beloved Antigone, and Polynices proceeds to narrate the wrongs he has undergone from Eteocles, and, warming with a young warrior's ardour, paints the array that he has mustered on his behalf—promises to restore Œdipus to his palace—and, alluding to the oracle, throws himself on his father's pardon.

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* As each poet had but three actors allowed him, the song of the Chorus probably gave time for the representative of Theseus to change his dress, and re-appear as Polynices.

Then, at last, outspeaks Œdipus, and from reproach bursts into curses.

"And now you weep;—you wept not at these woes
Until you wept your own. But I—*I* weep not.
These things are not for tears, but for endurance.
My son is like his sire—a parricide!
Toil, exile, beggary—daily bread doled out
From stranger hands—these are your gifts, my son!
My nurses, guardians—they who share the want,
Or earn the bread, are daughters; call them not
Women, for they to me are men. Go to!—
Thou art not mine—I do disclaim such issue.
Behold, the eyes of the avenging God
Are o'er thee! but their ominous light delays
To blast thee yet. March on—march on—to Thebes!
Not—not for thee, the city and the throne;
The earth shall first be reddened with thy blood—
Thy blood and *his*, thy foe—thy brother! Curses!
Not for the first time summoned to my wrongs—
Curses! I call ye back, and make ye now
Allies with this old man!——

* * * * * *

Yea, Curses shall possess thy seat and throne,
If antique Justice o'er the laws of earth

Reign with the Thunder God. March on to ruin!
Spurned and disowned—the basest of the base—
And with thee bear this burthen:—o'er thine head
I pour a prophet's doom; nor throne nor home
Waits on the sharpness of the levelled spear:
Thy very land of refuge hath no welcome;
Thine eyes have looked their last on hollow Argos.
Death by a brother's hand—dark fratricide,
Murthering thyself a brother—shall be thine.
Yea, while I curse thee, on the murky deep
Of the primæval Hell, I call   Prepare
These men their home, dread Tartarus!—Goddesses,
Whose shrines are round me—ye avenging Furies!
And thou, O Lord of Battle, who hast stirred
Hate in the souls of brethren, hear me—hear me!—
And now, 'tis past!—enough!—depart and tell
The Theban people, and thy fond allies,
What blessings, from his refuge with the Furies,
The blind old Œdipus awards his sons!"*

As is usual with Sophocles, the terrific strength of these execrations is immediately followed by a soft and pathetic scene between Antigone and her brother. Though crushed at first by the paternal curse, the spirit of Polynices so far recovers its native courage that he will not listen to the prayer of his sister to desist from the expedition to Thebes, and to turn his armies back to Argos. "What!" he says,

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* The imagery in the last two lines has been amplified from the original in order to bring before the reader what the representation would have brought before the spectator.

> "Lead back an army that could deem I trembled!"

Yet he feels the mournful persuasion that his death is doomed; and a glimpse of the plot of the 'Antigone' is opened upon us by his prayer to his sister that if he perish, they should lay him with due honours in the tomb. The exquisite loveliness of Antigone's character touches even Polynices, and he departs, saying,

> "With the Gods rests the balance of our fate;
> But thee, at least—O never upon thee
> May evil fall! Thou art too good for sorrow!"

The Chorus resume their strains, when suddenly thunder is heard; and Œdipus hails the sign that heralds him to the shades. Nothing can be conceived more appalling than this omen. It seems as if Œdipus had been spared but to curse his children, and to die. He summons Theseus, tells him that his fate is at hand, and that without a guide he himself will point out the spot where he shall rest. Never may that spot be told—that secret and solemn grave shall be the charm of the land, and a defence against its foes. Œdipus then turns round, and the instinct within guides him as he gropes along. His daughters and Theseus follow the blind man, amazed and awed. "Hither," he says,

"Hither—by this way come—for this way leads
The Unseen Conductor of the Dead*—and She,
Whom Shadows call their Queen!†—O Light, sweet Light
Rayless to me—mine once, and even now
I feel thee palpable, round this worn form
Clinging in last embrace—I go to shroud
The waning life in the Eternal Hades!"

Thus the stage is left to the Chorus, and the mysterious fate of Œdipus is recited by the Nuntius, in verses which Longinus has not extolled too highly. Œdipus had led the way to a cavern, well known in legendary lore as the spot where Pirithous and Theseus had pledged their faith, by the brazen steps which make one of the entrances to the infernal realms;

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* Mercury.

† Proserpine.

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"Between which place and the Thorician stone—
The hollow thorn, and the sepulchral pile
He sate him down."

And when he had performed libations from the stream, and laved, and decked himself in the funereal robes, Jove thundered beneath the earth, and the old man's daughters, aghast with horror, fell at his knees with sobs and groans.

"Then o'er them as they wept, his hands he clasped,
And 'O my children,' said he, 'from this day
Ye have no more a father—all of me
Withers away—the burthen and the toil
Of mine old age fall on ye nevermore.
Sad travail have ye borne for me, and yet
Let one thought soften grief when I am gone—
The thought that none upon the desolate world
Loved you as I did;—and in death I leave
A happier life to you!'

Thus movingly,
With clinging arms and passionate sobs, the three
Wept out aloud, until the sorrow grew
Into a deadly hush—nor cry nor wail
Starts the drear silence of the solitude.
Then suddenly a bodiless voice is heard,—
It call'd on him—it call'd; and over all

Horror fell cold, and stirr'd the bristling hair!
Again, the Voice—again—' Ho! Œdipus,
Why linger we so long? Come—hither—come.' "

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Œdipus then solemnly consigns his children to Theseus, dismisses them, and Theseus alone is left with the old man.

" So groaning we depart—and when once more
We turned our eyes to gaze, behold, the place
Knew not the man! The king *alone* was there,
Holding his spread hands o'er averted brows,
As if to shut from out the quailing gaze,
The horrid aspect of some ghastly thing
That nature durst not look on. So we paused
Until the king awakened from the terror,
And to the mother Earth, and high Olympus,
Seat of the gods, he breathed awe-stricken prayer.
But, how the old man perished, save the king,
Mortal can ne'er divine; for bolt, nor levin,
Nor blasting tempest from the ocean borne,
Was heard or seen; but either was he rapt
Aloft by wings divine, or else the shades,
Whose darkness never looked upon the sun,
Yawned in grim mercy, and the rent abyss
Engulf'd the wanderer from the living world."

Such, sublime in its wondrous power, its appalling mystery, its dim, religious terror, is the catastrophe of the 'Œdipus' at Colonos. The lines that follow are devoted to the lamentations of the daughters, and appear wholly superfluous, unless we can consider that Sophocles desired to indicate the connection of the 'Œdipus' with the 'Antigone,' by informing us that the daughters of Œdipus are to be sent to Thebes at the request of Antigone herself, who hopes, in the tender courage of her nature, that she may perhaps prevent the predicted slaughter of her brothers.

VII. Coming now to the tragedy of 'Antigone,' we find the prophecy of Œdipus has been fulfilled—the brothers have fallen by the hand of each other—the Argive army has been defeated—Creon has obtained the tyranny, and interdicts, on the penalty of death, the burial of Polynices, whose corpse remains guarded and unhonoured. Antigone, mindful of her brother's request to her in their last interview, resolves to brave the edict, and perform those rites so indispensably sacred in the eyes of a Greek. She communicates her resolution to her sister Ismene, whose character, still feeble and common-place, is a perpetual foil to the heroism of Antigone. She acts upon her resolutions, baffles the vigilant guards, buries the corpse.

Creon, on learning that his edict has been secretly disobeyed, orders the remains to be disinterred, and in a second attempt, Antigone is discovered, brought before him, and condemned to death. Hæmon, the son of Creon, had been affianced to Antigone. On the news of her sentence, he seeks Creon, and after a violent scene between the two, which has neither the power nor the dignity common to Sophocles, departs with vague menaces. A short but most exquisite invocation to Love from the Chorus succeeds, and in this, it may be observed, the Chorus express much left not represented in the action —— they serve to impress on the spectator all the irresistible effects of the passion, which the modern artist would seek to represent in some moving scene between Antigone and Hæmon. The heroine herself now passes across the stage on her way to her dreadful doom, which is that of living burial in "the cavern of a rock." She thus addresses the Chorus,

"Ye, of the land wherein my fathers dwelt,
Behold me journeying to my latest bourne!
Time hath no morrow for these eyes. Black Orcus,
Whose court hath room for all, leads my lone steps
Ev'n whilst I live—to Shadows. Not for me

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The nuptial blessing or the marriage hymn:—
Acheron, receive thy bride!
(*Chorus.*) Honoured and mourned,
Nor struck by slow disease, or violent hand,
Thy steps glide to the grave! Self-judged, like Freedom,*
Thou, above mortals gifted, shalt descend,
All living to the shades.
Antigone. Methinks I have heard—
So legends go—how Phrygian Niobe,
(Poor stranger,) on the heights of Sipylus,
Mournfully died. The hard rock, like the tendrils
O' the ivy, clung and crept unto her heart:—
Her, nevermore, dissolving into showers,
Pale snows desert;—and from her sorrowful eyes
As from unfailing founts, adown the cliffs,
Fall the eternal dews. Like her, the God
Lulls me to sleep, and into stone!"

Afterwards she adds, in her beautiful lament, "That she has one comfort—she shall go to the grave dear to her parents and her brother."

The grief of Antigone is in perfect harmony with her character—it betrays no repentance, no weakness—it is but the natural sorrow of youth and womanhood, going down to that grave which had so little of hope in the old Greek religion. In an Antigone on our stage we might have demanded more reference to her lover; but the Grecian heroine names him not, and alludes rather to the loss of the woman's lot of wedlock, than the loss of the individual bridegroom. But it is not for that reason that we are to conclude with M. Schlegel, and others, that the Greek women knew not the sentiment of love. Such a notion, that has obtained an unaccountable belief, I shall hereafter show to be at variance with all the poetry of the Greeks—with their drama itself—with their modes of life—and with the very elements of that human nature, which is everywhere the same. But Sophocles, in the character of Antigone, personifies duty, not passion. It is to this, her leading, individuality, that whatever might weaken the pure and statue-like effect of the creation is sacrificed. As she was to her father, so is she to her brother. The sorrows and calamities of her family have so endeared them to her heart that she has room for little else. "Formed," as she exquisitely says of herself, "to love, not to hate,"* she lives but to devote affections the most sacred to sad and pious tasks, and the last fulfilled, she has done with earth.

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* Αὐτόνομος.—Antig. 821.

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* *Οὔ τοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν.*
Antig. 523.

When Antigone is borne away, an august personage is presented to us, whose very name to *us*, who usually read the Œdipus Tyrannus before the Antigone, is the foreteller of omen and doom. As in the Œdipus Tyrannus, Tiresias the soothsayer appears to announce all the terrors that ensue—so now, at the crowning desolation of that fated house, he, the solemn and mysterious survivor of such dark tragedies, is again brought upon the stage. The auguries have been evil—birds battle with each other in the air—the flame will not mount from the sacrificial victim—and the altars and hearths are full of birds and dogs, gathering to their feast on the corpse of Polynices. The soothsayer enjoins Creon not to war against the dead, and to accord the rites of burial to the prince's body. On the obstinate refusal of Creon, Tiresias utters prophetic maledictions and departs. Creon, whose vehemence of temper is combined with a feeble character, and strongly contrasts the mighty spirit of Œdipus, repents, and is persuaded by the Chorus to release Antigone from her living prison, as well as to revoke the edict which denies sepulture to Polynices. He quits the stage for that purpose, and the Chorus burst into one of their most picturesque odes, an Invocation to Bacchus, thus inadequately presented to the English reader.

O thou, whom earth by many a title hails,
Son of the Thunder-God; and wild delight
Of the wild Theban maid!
Whether on far Italia's shores obey'd,
Or where Eleusis joins thy solemn rites
With the Great Mother's,[*] in mysterious vales,—
Bacchus in Bacchic Thebes best known,
Thy Thebes, who claims the Thyads as her daughters;
Fast by the fields with warriors dragon-sown,
And where Ismenus rolls his rapid waters.
It saw thee, the smoke,
On the horned height—[†]
It saw thee, and broke
With a leap into light;—
Where roam Corycian nymphs the glorious mountain,
And all melodious flows the old Castalian fountain:--
Vocal with echoes wildly-glad,
The Nysian steeps with ivy clad,
And shores with vineyards greenly blooming,

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[*] Ceres.

[†] *υπερ διλόφον πέτρας*—viz. Parnassus. The Bacchanalian light on the double crest of Parnassus, which announced the god, is a favourite allusion with the Greek poets.

Proclaiming, steep to shore,
That Bacchus evermore,
Is guardian of the race,
Where he holds his dwelling-place
With her,* beneath the breath,
Of the thunder's glowing death,
In the glare of her glory consuming.

O now with healing steps along the slope
Of lov'd Parnassus, or in gliding motion,
O'er the far-sounding deep Eubœan ocean—
Come! for we perish—come!—our Lord and hope!
Leader of the stately choir
Of the great stars, whose very breath is light,
Who dost with hymns inspire
Voices, O youngest god, that sound by night;
Come, with thy Mænad throng,
Come with the Maidens of thy Naxian isle,
Who chaunt their Lord Iacchus—all the while,
Maddening, with mystic dance, the solemn midnight long!

At the close of the Chorus the Nuntius enters to announce the catastrophe, and Eurydice, the wife of Creon, disturbed by rumours within her palace, is made an auditor of the narration. Creon and his train, after burying Polynices, repair to the cavern in which Antigone had been immured. They hear loud wailings within "that unconsecrated chamber"—it is the voice of Hæmon. Creon recoils—the attendants enter—within the cavern they behold Antigone, who, in the horror of that death-like solitude had strangled herself with the zone of her robe;—and there was her lover lying beside, his arms clasped around her waist. Creon at length advances, perceives his son, and conjures him to come forth.

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* His mother, Semele.

> "Then, glaring on his father with wild eyes,
> The son stood dumb, and spat upon his face,
> And clutched the unnatural sword—the father fled,
> And, wroth, as with the arm that missed a parent,
> The wretched man drove home unto his breast
> The abhorrent steel; yet ever, while dim sense
> Struggled within the fast-expiring soul—
> Feebler, and feebler still, his stiffening arms
> Clung to that virgin form—and every gasp
> Of his last breath, with bloody dews distained
> The cold white cheek that was his pillow. So
> Lies death embracing death!*

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* Aristotle finds fault with the incident of the son attempting to strike his father, as being shocking, yet not tragic—that is, the violent action is episodical, since it is not carried

In the midst of this description, by a fine stroke of art, Eurydice, the mother of Hæmon, abruptly and silently quits the stage.* When next we hear of her she has destroyed herself, with her last breath cursing her husband as the murderer of her child. The end of the play leaves Creon the survivor. He himself does not perish, for he himself has never excited our sympathies.† He is punished through his son and wife—they dead, our interest ceases in him, and to add his death to

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into effect; yet, if we might connect the plot of the 'Antigone' with the former plays of either 'Œdipus,' there is something of retribution in the attempted parricide when we remember the hypocritical and cruel severity of Creon to the involuntary parricide of Œdipus. The whole description of the son in that living tomb, glaring on his father with his drawn sword, the dead form of his betrothed, with the subsequent picture of the lovers joined in death, constitutes one of the most masterly combinations of pathos and terror in ancient or modern poetry.

* This is not the only passage in which Sophocles expresses feminine woe by silence. In the Trachiniæ, Deianira vanishes in the same dumb abruptness when she hears from her son the effect of the centaur's gift upon her husband.

† According to that most profound maxim of Aristotle, that in tragedy a very bad man should never be selected as the object of chastisement, since his fate is not calculated to excite our sympathies.

theirs, and to that of Antigone, would be bathos.

VIII. In the tragedy of 'Electra,' the character of the heroine stands out in the boldest contrast to the creation of the Antigone; both are endowed with surpassing majesty and strength of nature—they are loftier than the daughters of men, their very loveliness is of an age when gods were no distant ancestors of kings—when, as in the early sculptors of Pallas, or even of Aphrodite, something of the severe and stern was deemed necessary to the realisation of the Divine; and the Beautiful had not lost the colossal proportions of the Sublime. But the strength and heroism of Antigone is derived from love—love, sober, serene, august—but still love. Electra, on the contrary, is supported and exalted above her sex by the might of her hatred. Her father, 'the king of men,' foully murthered in his palace—herself compelled to consort with his assassins—to receive from their hands both charity and insult—the adulterous murderer on her father's throne, and lord of her father's marriage bed*—her brother, a wanderer and an outcast. Such are the thoughts unceasingly before her! —her heart and soul have for years fed upon the bitterness of a resentment, at once impotent and intense, and nature itself has turned to gall. She sees not in Clytemnestra a mother, but the murderess of a father. The doubt and the compunction of the modern Hamlet are unknown to her more masculine spirit. She lives on but in the hope of her brother's return, and of revenge. The play opens with the appearance of Orestes, Pylades, and an old attendant—arrived at break of day at the habitation of the Pelopidæ—"reeking with blood"—the seats of Agamemnon. Orestes, who had been saved in childhood by his sister from the designs of Clytemnestra and Ægisthus, has now returned, in manhood. It is agreed that, in order to lull all suspicion in the royal adulterers, a false account of the death of Orestes by an accident in the Pythian games shall be given to Clytemnestra; and Orestes and Pylades themselves are afterwards to be introduced in the character of Phocians, bearing the ashes of the supposed dead. Meanwhile the two friends repair to the sepulchre of Agamemnon to offer libations, &c. Electra then appears, indulges her indignant lamentations at her lot, and consoles herself with the hope of her brother's speedy return.

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* Electra, l. 250—300.

She is joined by her sister Chrysothemis, who is bearing sepulchral offerings to the tomb of Agamemnon; and in this interview, Sophocles, with extraordinary skill and deep knowledge of human nature, contrives to excite our admiration and sympathy for the vehement Electra by contrasting her with the weak and selfish Chrysothemis. Her very bitterness against her mother is made to assume the guise of a solemn duty to her father. Her unfeminine qualities rise into courage and magnanimity—she glories in the unkindness and persecution she meets with from Clytemnestra and Ægisthus—they are proofs of her reverence to the dead. Woman as she is, she is yet the daughter of a king—she cannot submit to an usurper—"she will not add cowardice to misery." Chrysothemis informs Electra that on the return of Ægisthus it is resolved to consign her to a vault 'where she may chaunt her woes unheard.' Electra learns the meditated sentence undismayed—she will not moderate her unwelcome woe—"she will not be a traitress to those she loves." But a dream has appalled Clytemnestra—Agamemnon has appeared to her as in life. In the vision he seemed to her to fix his sceptre in the soil, whence it sprouted up into a tree that overshadowed the whole land. Disquieted and conscience-stricken, she now sends Chrysothemis with libations to appease the manes of the dead.

Electra adjures Chrysothemis not to render such expiations—to scatter them to the winds, or on the dust—to let them not approach the resting-place of the murdered king. Chrysothemis promises to obey the injunction, and departs. A violent and powerful scene between Clytemnestra and Electra ensues, when the attendant enters (as was agreed on) to announce the death of Orestes. In this recital he portrays the ceremony of the Pythian races in lines justly celebrated, and which, as an animated and faithful picture of an exhibition so renowned, the reader may be pleased to see, even in a feeble and cold translation. Orestes had obtained five victories in the first day—in the second he starts with nine competitors in the chariot-race —an Achæan, a Spartan, two Libyans—he himself, with Thessalian steeds—a sixth from Ætolia; a Magnesian, an Ænian, an Athenian, and a Bœotian complete the number.

"They took their stand where the appointed judges
Had cast their lots, and ranged the rival cars;
Rang out the brazen trump! Away they bound,
Cheer the hot steeds and shake the slackened reins;
As with a body the large space is filled
With the huge clangour of the rattling cars:
High whirl aloft the dust-clouds;—blent together

Each presses each—and the lash rings—and loud
Snort the wild steeds, and from their fiery breath,
Along their manes and down the circling wheels,
Scatter the flaking foam. Orestes still,
Aye, as he swept around the perilous pillar
Last in the course, wheel'd in the rushing axle ;
The left rein curbed,—that on the dexter hand
Flung loose.—So on erect the chariots rolled !
Sudden the Ænian's fierce and headlong steeds
Broke from the bit—and, as the seventh time now
The course was circled, on the Lybian car
Dash'd their wild fronts :—then order changed to ruin :
Car crashed on car—the wide Crissæan plain
Was, sea-like, strewn with wrecks ; the Athenian saw
Slackened his speed, and, wheeling round the marge,
Unscathed and skilful, in the midmost space,
Left the wild tumult of that tossing storm.
Behind, Orestes, hitherto the last,
Had yet kept back his coursers for the close ;
Now one sole rival left—on, on he flew,
And the sharp sound of the impelling scourge
Rang in the keen ears of the flying steeds.
He nears—he reaches—they are side by side ·
Now one—the other—by a length the victor.
The courses all are past—the wheels erect—
All safe—when as the hurrying coursers round
The fatal pillar dash'd, the wretched boy

Slackened the *left* rein: on the column's edge
Crash'd the frail axle—headlong from the car,
Caught and all meshed within the reins he fell;
And masterless, the mad steeds raged along!

Loud from that mighty multitude arose
A shriek—a shout! But yesterday such deeds—
To-day such doom!—Now whirled upon the earth,
Now his limbs dash'd aloft, they dragged him—those
Wild horses—till all gory from the wheels
Released,—and no man, not his nearest friends,
Could in that mangled corpse have traced Orestes.

They laid the body on the funeral pyre,
And while we speak, the Phocian strangers bear,
In a small, brazen, melancholy urn,
That handful of cold ashes to which all
The grandeur of the Beautiful hath shrunk.
Hither they bear him—in his father's land
To find that heritage—a tomb!"

It is much to be regretted that this passage, so fine in the original, is liable to one great objection—it has no interest as connected with the play, because the audience know that Orestes is not dead, and though the description of the race retains its animation, the report of the catastrophe loses the terror of reality, and appears but a highly coloured and elaborate falsehood.

The reader will conceive the lamentations of Electra, and the fearful joy of Clytemnestra, at a narrative by which the one appears to lose a brother and a friend—the other, a son and an avenging foe.

Chrysothemis joyfully returns to announce, that by the tomb of Agamemnon she discovers a lock of hair; libations yet moisten the summit of the mound, and flowers of every hue are scattered over the grave. 'These,' she thinks, 'are signs that Orestes is returned.' Electra, informing her of the fatal news, proposes that they, women as they are, shall attempt the terrible revenge which their brother can no longer execute. When Chrysothemis recoils and refuses, Electra still nurses the fell design. The poet has more than once, and now again with judgment, made us sensible of the mature years of Electra;* she is no passionate, wavering, and inexperienced girl, but the eldest-born of the house, the guardian of the childhood of its male heir: unwedded and unloving, no soft matron cares, no tender maiden affections, have unbent the nerves of her stern, fiery, and concentrated soul. Year after year has rolled on to sharpen her hatred—to disgust her with the present—to root her to one bloody memory of the past—to sour and freeze up the gentle thoughts of womanhood—to unsex

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* When (line 614) Clytemnestra reproaches Electra for using insulting language to a mother—and 'Electra, too, at such a time of life'—I am surprised that some of the critics should deem it doubtful whether Clytemnestra meant to allude to her being too young or too mature for such unfilial vehemence. The age of Orestes, so much the junior to

> " And fill her from the crown to the toe, top-full
> Of direst cruelty—make thick her blood—
> Stop up the access and passage to remorse,"[*]

and fit her for one crowning deed, for which alone the daughter of the king of men lives on.

At length the pretended Phocians enter, bearing the supposed ashes of Orestes; the chief of the train addresses himself to Electra, and this is the most dramatic and touching scene in the

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Electra, proves the latter signification to be the indisputable one, and so do the very words of Electra herself to her younger sister, Chrysothemis, when she tells her that she is "*growing old*, unwedded,"

ἐστοσ᾽ονδε τοῦ χρόνου
ἄλεκτρα γηάρσκουσαν ἀνυμέναία τε.

Brunck has a judicious note on Electra's age. Line 614.

[*] Macbeth, act. i. scene 5.

whole tragedy. When the urn containing, as she believes, the dust of her brother, is placed in the hands of Electra, we can well overleap time and space, and see before us the great actor who brought the relics of his own son upon the stage, and shed no mimic sorrows*—we can well picture the emotions that circle round the vast audience—pity itself being mingled with the consciousness to which the audience alone are admitted, that lamentation will soon be replaced by joy, and that the living Orestes is before his sister. It is by a most subtle and delicate art that Sophocles permits this struggle between present pain and anticipated pleasure, and carries on the passion of the spectators to wait breathlessly the moment when Orestes shall be discovered. We now perceive why the poet at once, in the opening of the play, announced to us the existence and return of Orestes—why he disdained the vulgar source of interest, the gross suspense we should have felt, if we had shared the ignorance of Electra, and not been admitted to the secret we impatiently long to be communicated to her. In this scene, our superiority to Electra, in the knowledge we possess, refines and softens our compassion, blending it with hope. And most beautifully here does Sophocles remove far from us the thought of the hard

* See p. 592, note 2.

hatred that hitherto animates the mourner—the strong, proud spirit is melted away—the woman and the sister alone appear. He whom she had loved more dearly than a mother—whom she had nursed, and saved, and prayed for, is "a nothing" in her hands; and the last rites it had not been her's to pay. He had been

> "By strangers honoured, and by strangers mourned."

All things had vanished with him—'vanished in a day'—'vanished as by a hurricane'—she is left with her foes alone. "Admit me," (she cries,) "to thy refuge—make room for me in thy home."

In these lamentations, the cold, classic drama seems to warm into actual life. Art, exquisite because invisible, unites us at once with imperishable nature—we are no longer delighted with Poetry—we are weeping with Truth.

At length Orestes reveals himself, and now the plot draws to its catastrophe. Clytemnestra is alone in her house, preparing a caldron for the burial; Electra and the Chorus are on the stage; the son—the avenger, is within; suddenly the cries of Clytemnestra are heard. Again—again! Orestes re-enters a parricide!* He retires as

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* Sophocles skilfully avoids treading the ground conse-

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IV.

Ægisthus is seen approaching; and the adulterous usurper is now presented to us for the first and last time—the crowning victim of the sacrifice. He comes flushed with joy and triumph. He has heard that the dreaded Orestes is no more. Electra entertains him a few moments with words darkly and exultingly ambiguous. He orders the doors to be thrown open, that all Argos and Mycenæ may see the remains of his sole rival for the throne. The scene opens.—On the threshold (where with the Greeks the corpse of the dead was usually set out to view) lies a body covered with a veil or pall. Orestes (the supposed Phocian) stands beside.

"*Ægisthus.* Great Jove! a grateful spectacle—if thus
May it be said unsinning; yet if she,
The awful Nemesis, be nigh and hear,
I do recal the sentence!—Raise the pall.
The dead was kindred to me, and shall know
A kinsman's sorrow.

Orestes. Lift thyself the pall;
Not mine, but thine, the office, to survey
That which lies mute beneath, and to salute
Lovingly sad, the dead one.

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crated to Æschylus. He does not bring the murder before us with the struggles and resolve of Orestes.

Ægisthus. Be it so—
It is well said. Go thou and call the queen ,
Is she within?
Orestes. Look not around for her—
She is beside thee!"

Ægisthus lifts the pall, and beholds the body of Clytemnestra! He knows his fate at once. He knows that Orestes is before him. He attempts to speak. The fierce Electra cuts him short, and Orestes, with stern solemnity, conducts him from the stage to the spot on which Ægisthus had slain Agamemnon, so that the murderer might die by the son's hand in the place where the father fell. Thus artistically is the catastrophe not lessened in effect, but heightened, by removing the deed of death from the scene—the poetical justice in the calm and premeditated selection of the place of slaughter, elevates what on the modern stage would have been but a spectacle of physical horror into the deeper terror and sublimer gloom of a moral awe; and vindictive murder, losing its aspect, is idealised and hallowed into religious sacrifice.

IX. Of the seven plays left to us, "The Trachiniæ" is usually considered the least imbued with the genius of Sophocles; and Schlegel has even ventured on a conjecture singularly destitute of even plausible testimony,—that Sophocles himself may not be the author. The plot is soon told. The play is opened by Deianira, he wife of Hercules, who indulges in melancholy reflections on the misfortunes of her youth, and the continual absence of her husband, of whom no tidings have been heard for months. She soon learns from her son, Hyllus, that Hercules is said to be leading an expedition into Eubœa; and our interest is immediately excited by Deianira's reply, which informs us that oracles had foretold that this was to be the crisis* in the life of Hercules—that he was now to enjoy rest from his labours, either in a peaceful home or in the grave; and she sends Hyllus to join his father, share his enterprise, and fate. The Chorus touchingly paint the anxious love of Deianira in the following lines:

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* This is very characteristic of Sophocles: he is especially fond of employing what may be called 'a crisis in life' as a source of immediate interest to the audience. So in the "Œdipus at Colonos," Œdipus no sooner finds he is in the grove of the Furies than he knows his hour is approaching; so, also, in the "Ajax," the Nuntius announces from the soothsayer, that if Ajax can survive the one day which makes the crisis of his life, the anger of the goddess will cease. This characteristic of the peculiar style of Sophocles might be considered as one of the proofs (were any wanting) of the authenticity of the 'Trachiniæ.'

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" Thou, whom the star-y-spangled Night did lull
Into the sleep from which—her journey done—
Her parting steps awake thee,—Beautiful
Fountain of flame, O Sun!
Say, on what sea-girt strand, or inland shore,
(For earth is bared before thy solemn gaze,)
In orient Asia, or where milder rays
Tremble on western waters, wandereth he
Whom bright Alcmena bore?
Ah! as some bird within a lonely nest
The desolate wife puts sleep away with tears;
And ever ills to be
Haunting the absence with dim hosts of fears,
Fond fancy shapes from air dark prophets of the breast."

* * * *

In her answer to the virgin Chorus, Deianira weaves a beautiful picture of maiden youth as a contrast to the cares and anxieties of wedded life:

" Youth pastures in a valley of its own;
The scorching sun, the rains and winds of Heaven,
Mar not the calm—yet virgin of all care;
But ever with sweet joys it buildeth up
The airy halls of life."

Deianira afterwards receives fresh news of

Hercules. She gives way to her joy. Lichas, the herald, enters, and confides to her charge some maidens whom the hero had captured. Deianira is struck with compassion for their lot, and with admiration of the noble bearing of one of them, Iole. She is about to busy herself in preparation for their comfort, when she learns that Iole is her rival—the beloved mistress of Hercules. The jealousy evinced by Deianira is beautifully soft and womanly.* Even in uttering a reproach on Hercules, she says she cannot feel anger with him, yet how can she dwell in the same house with a younger and fairer rival ;—

> " She in whose years the flower that fades in mine
> Opens the leaves of beauty."

Her affection, her desire to retain the love of the hero, suggests to her remembrance a gift she had once received from a centaur who had fallen by the shaft of Hercules. The centaur had assured her, that the blood from his wound, if preserved, would exercise the charm of a philtre over the heart of Hercules, and would ever recal and fix upon her his affection. She had preserved the supposed charm—she steeps with it a robe that she purposes to send to Hercules as a gift; but Deianira, in this fatal resolve, shows all the timidity and sweetness of her nature; she even questions if it be a crime to regain the heart of her husband; she consults the Chorus, who advise the experiment, (and here it may be observed, that this is skilfully done, for it conveys the excuse of Deianira, the Chorus being, as it were, the representative of the audience.) Accordingly, she sends the garment by Lichas. Scarce has the herald gone, ere Deianira is terrified by a strange phenomenon: a part of the wool with which the supposed philtre had been applied to the garment, was thrown into the sunlight, upon which it withered away—"crumbling like sawdust"—while on the spot where it fell a sort of venomous foam froths up. While relating this phenomenon to the Chorus, her son, Hyllus, returns,* and relates the agonies of his father under the poisoned garment: he had indued the robe on the occasion of solemn sacrifice, and all was rejoicing, when,

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* M. Schlegel rather wantonly accuses Deianira of ' levity :'—all her motives, on the contrary, are pure and high, though tender and affectionate.

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* Observe the violation of the unity which Sophocles, the most artistical of all the Greek tragedians, does not hesitate to commit, whenever he thinks it necessary. Hyllus, at the beginning of the play, went to Cenæum; he has been already there and back—viz. a distance from Mount Œta to a promontory in Eubœa, during the time about seven hundred and thirty lines have taken up in recital! Nor is this all: just before the last Chorus—only about one hundred lines back—

> "As from the sacred offering and the pile
> The flame broke forth,"

the poison began to work, the tunic clung to the limbs of the hero, glued as if by the artificer, and in his agony and madness, Hercules dashes Lichas, who brought him the fatal gift, down the rock, and is now on his way home. On hearing these news, and the reproaches of her son, Deianira steals silently away, and destroys herself upon the bridal-bed. The remainder of the play is very feeble. Hercules is represented in his anguish, which is but the mere raving of physical pain; and after enjoining his son to marry Iole, (the innocent cause of his own sufferings,) and to place him yet living upon his funeral pyre, the play ends.

The beauty of the "Trachiniæ" is in detached passages, in some exquisite bursts by the

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Lichas set out to Cenæum; and yet sufficient time is supposed to have elapsed for him to have arrived there—been present at a sacrifice—been killed by Hercules,—and after all this, for Hyllus, who tells the tale, to have performed the journey back to Trachin.

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Chorus, and in the character of Deianira, whose artifice to regain the love of her consort, unhappily as it terminates, is redeemed by a meekness of nature, a delicacy of sentiment, and an anxious, earnest, unreproachful devotion of conjugal love, which might alone suffice to show the absurdity of modern declamations on the debasement of women, and the absence of pure and true love, in that land from which Sophocles drew his experience.

X. The "Ajax" is far superior to the "Trachiniæ." The subject is one that none but a Greek poet could have thought of, or a Greek audience have admired. The master-passion of a Greek was emulation—the subject of the "Ajax" is emulation defeated. He has lost to Ulysses the prize of the arms of Achilles, and the shame of being vanquished has deprived him of his senses. In the fury of madness he sallies from his tent at night—slaughters the flocks, in which his insanity sees the Greeks, whose award has galled and humbled him—and supposes he has slain the Atridæ and captured Ulysses. It is in this play that Sophocles has, to a certain extent, attempted that most effective of all combinations in the hands of a master—the combination of the ludicrous and the terrible:*—as the Chorus implies, "it is to laugh and to weep." But when the scene, opening, discovers Ajax sitting amidst the slaughtered victims—when that haughty hero awakens from his delirium—when he is aware that he has exposed himself to the mockery and derision of his foes—the effect is almost too painful even for tragedy. In contrast to Ajax is the soothing, and tender Tecmessa. The women of Sophocles are, indeed, gifted with an astonishing mixture of majesty and sweetness. After a very pathetic farewell with his young son, Ajax affects to be reconciled to his lot, disguises the resolution he has formed, and by one of those artful transitions of emotion which at once vary and heighten interest on the stage, the Chorus, before lamenting, bursts into a strain of congratulation and joy. The heavy affliction has passed away—Ajax is restored. The Nuntius arrives from the camp. Calchas, the soothsayer, has besought Teucer, the hero's brother, not to permit Ajax to quit his tent that day, for on that day only Minerva persecutes him; and if he survive it, he may yet be preserved and prosper. But Ajax has already wandered away, none know whither. Tecmessa hastens in search of him, and by a very rare departure from the customs of the Greek stage, the Chorus follow.

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* Even Ulysses, the successful rival of Ajax, exhibits a reluctance to face the madman, which is not without humour.

Ajax appears again. His passions are now calm and concentrated, but they lead him on to death. He has been shamed, dishonoured,—he has made himself a mockery to his foes. Nobly to live or nobly to die is the sole choice of a brave man. It is characteristic of the Greek temperament, that the personages of the Greek poetry ever bid a last lingering and half-reluctant farewell to the sun. There is a magnificent fulness of life in those children of the beautiful Hellas; the sun is to them as a familiar friend—the affliction or the terror of Hades is in the thought, that its fields are sunless. The orb which animated their temperate heaven, which ripened their fertile earth, in which they saw the type of eternal youth, of surpassing beauty, of incarnate poetry—human in its associations and yet divine in its nature—is equally beloved and equally to be mourned by the maiden tenderness of Antigone, or the sullen majesty of Ajax. In a Chaldæan poem the hero would have bid farewell to the stars!

It is thus that Ajax concludes his celebrated soliloquy;—

> "And thou that mak'st high heaven thy chariot-course,
> O Sun—when gazing on my father-land,
> Draw back thy golden rein, and tell my woes

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To the old man, my father—and to her
Who nursed me at her bosom—my poor mother!
There will be wailing thro' the echoing walls
When—but away with thoughts like these!—the hour
Brings on the ripening deed.—Death, death, look on me,
Did I say death—it was a waste of words;
We shall be friends hereafter.
—'Tis the DAY,
Present and breathing round me, and the car
Of the sweet sun, that never shall again
Receive my greeting!—henceforth time is sunless,
And day a thing that is not!—Beautiful Light,
My Salamis—my country—and the floor
Of my dear household-hearth—and thou, bright Athens,
Thou,—for thy sons and I were boys together—
Fountains and Rivers, and ye Trojan Plains,
I loved ye as my fosterers,—fare ye well!
Take in these words, the last earth hears from Ajax—
All else unspoken, in a Spectre Land
I'll whisper to the Dead!"

Ajax perishes on his sword—but the interest of the play survives him. For with the Greeks, burial rather than death made the great close of life. Teucer is introduced to us; the protector of the hero's remains: and his character, at once fierce and tender, is a sketch of extraordinary power.—

Agamemnon, on the contrary—also not presented to us till after the death of Ajax—is but a boisterous tyrant.* Finally, by the generous intercession of Ulysses, who redeems his character from the unfavourable conception we formed of him at the commencement of the play, the funeral rites are accorded, and a didactic and solemn moral from the Chorus concludes the whole.

X. The 'Philoctetes' has always been ranked by critics among the most elaborate and polished of the tragedies of Sophocles. In some respects it deserves the eulogies bestowed on it. But one great fault in the conception will, I think, be apparent on the simple statement of the plot.

Philoctetes, the friend and armour-bearer of

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* Potter says, in common with some other authorities, that "we may be assured that the political enmity of the Athenians to the Spartans and Argives was the cause of this odious representation of Menelaus and Agammennon."—But the Athenians had, at that time, no political enmity with the Argives, who were notoriously jealous of the Spartans; and as for the Spartans, Agamemnon and Menelaus were not their heroes and countrymen. On the contrary, it was the thrones of Menelaus and Agamemnon, which the Spartans overthrew. The royal brothers were probably sacrificed by the poet, not the patriot. The dramatic effects required that they should be made the foils to the manly fervour of Teucer, and the calm magnanimity of Ulysses.

Hercules, and the heir of that hero's unerring shafts and bow, had, while the Grecian fleet anchored at Chryse, (a small isle in the Ægæan,) been bitten in the foot by a serpent. The pain of the wound was insufferable—the shrieks and groans of Philoctetes disturbed the libations and sacrifices of the Greeks; and Ulysses and Diomed, when the fleet proceeded, left him, while asleep, on the wild and rocky solitudes of Lemnos. There, till the tenth year of the Trojan siege, he dragged out an agonizing life. The soothsayer, Helenus, then declared that Troy could not fall till Philoctetes appeared in the Grecian camp with the arrows and bow of Hercules. Ulysses undertakes to effect this object, and with Neoptolemus, (son of Achilles,) departs for Lemnos.—Here the play opens. A wild and desolate shore—a cavern with two mouths, (so that in winter there might be a double place to catch the sunshine,—and in summer a two-fold entrance for the breeze,) and a little fountain of pure water, designate the abode of Philoctetes.

Agreeably to his character, it is by deceit and stratagem that Ulysses is to gain his object. Neoptolemus is to dupe him whom he has never seen, with professions of friendship and offers of services, and to snare away the consecrated weapons. Neoptolemus—whose character is a

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sketch which Shakspeare alone could have bodied out—has all the generous ardour and honesty of youth, but he has also its timid irresolution—its docile submission to the great—its fear of the censure of the world. He recoils from the base task proposed to him; he would prefer violence to fraud; yet he dreads lest, having undertaken the enterprise, his refusal to act should be considered treachery to his coadjutor. It is with a deep and melancholy wisdom that Ulysses, who seems to contemplate his struggles with compassionate and not displeased superiority, thus attempts to reconcile the young man;—

> "Son of a noble sire!—*I* too, in youth,
> Had a slow tongue, and an impatient arm:
> But now, life tried, I hail in words, not deeds,
> The Universal Rulers of Mankind."

Neoptolemus is at last persuaded. Ulysses withdraws, Philoctetes appears. The delight of the lonely wretch on hearing his native language; on seeing the son of Achilles,—his description of his feelings when he first found himself abandoned in the desert—his relation of the hardships he has since undergone, are highly pathetic. He implores Neoptolemus to bear him away; and when the youth consents, he bursts into an exclamation of joy, which to the audience, in the secret of the perfidy to be practised on him, must have excited the most lively emotions. The characteristic excellence of Sophocles is, that in his most majestic creations, he always contrives to introduce the sweetest touches of humanity. Philoctetes will not even quit his miserable desert until he has returned to his cave to bid it farewell—to kiss the only shelter that did not deny a refuge to his woes. In the joy of his heart he thinks, poor dupe, that he has found faith in man—in youth. He trusts the arrows and the bow to the hand of Neoptolemus. Then, as he attempts to crawl along, the sharp agony of his wound completely overmasters him. He endeavours in vain to stifle his groans ; the body conquers the mind. This seems to me, as I shall presently again observe, the blot of the play ; it is a mere exhibition of physical pain. The torture exhausts, till insensibility or sleep comes over, him. He lies down to rest, and the young man watches over him. The picture is striking. Neoptolemus, at war with himself, does not seize the occasion. Philoctetes wakes. He is ready to go on board ; he implores and urges instant departure. Neoptolemus recoils—the suspicions of Philoctetes are awakened; he thinks that this stranger, too, will abandon him. At length, the young man, by a violent effort, speaks abruptly out, "Thou must sail to Troy,—to the Greeks—the Atridæ."

"The Greeks—the Atridæ!" the betrayers of Philoctetes!—those beyond pardon!—those whom for ten years he has pursued with the curses of a wronged, and deserted, and solitary spirit. "Give me back," he cries, "my bow and arrows." And when Neoptolemus refuses, he pours forth a torrent of reproach. The son of the truth-telling Achilles can withstand no longer. He is about to restore the weapons, when Ulysses rushes on the stage and prevents him.

At length, the sufferer is to be left—left once more alone in the desert. He cannot go with his betrayers—he cannot give glory and conquest to his inhuman foes; in the wrath of his indignant heart even the desert is sweeter than the Grecian camp. And how is he to sustain himself without his shafts? Famine adds a new horror to the dreary solitude, and the wild beasts may now pierce into his cavern: but *their* cruelty would be mercy! His contradictory and tempestuous emotions, as the sailors that compose the Chorus are about to depart, are thus told.

The Chorus entreat him to accompany them.

Phil. Begone.
Chor. It is a friendly bidding—we obey—
Come, let us go.—To ship, my comrades.
Phil. No—
No, do not go—by the great Jove, who hears
Men's curses—do not go.
Chor. Be calm.
Phil. Sweet strangers!
By the Gods, leave me not.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Chor. But now you bade us!
Phil. Ay—meet cause for chiding,
That a poor desperate wretch, maddened with pain,
Should talk as madmen do!
Chor. Come, then, with us.
Phil. Never!—oh—never! Were the veriest bolts
Of the Fire darting Thunderer hurl'd against me,
Still would I answer 'Never!' Perish Troy,
And all beleaguered round its walls—yea, all
Who had the heart to spurn a wounded wretch;
But, but—nay—yes—one prayer, one boon accord me.
Chor. What would'st thou have?
Phil. A sword, an axe, a something;
So it can strike, no matter!

Chor. Nay—for what?
Phil. What!—for this hand, to hew me off this head—
These limbs!—To Death, to solemn Death, at last
My spirit calls me.
Chor. Why?
Phil. To seek my father.
Chor. Whither?
Phil. In Hades.

. . . . .

Having thus worked us up to the utmost point of sympathy with the abandoned Philoctetes, the poet now gradually sheds a gentle and holier light over the intense gloom to which we had been led. Neoptolemus, touched with generous remorse, steals back to give the betrayed warrior his weapons—he is watched by the vigilant Ulysses—an angry altercation takes place between them. Ulysses, finding he cannot intimidate, prudently avoids personal encounter with, the son of Achilles, and departs to apprize the host of the backsliding of his comrade. A most beautiful scene ensues, in which Neoptolemus restores the weapons to Philoctetes—a scene which must have commanded the most exquisite tears, and the most rapturous applauses of the audience; and, finally, the God so useful to the ancient poets, brings all things, contrary to the general rule of Aristotle,* to a happy close. Hercules appears, and induces his former friend to accompany Neoptolemus to the Grecian camp, where his wound shall be healed. The farewell of Philoctetes to his cavern—to the nymphs of the meadows—to the roar of the ocean, whose spray the south wind dashed through his rude abode—to the Lycian stream and the plain of Lemnos,—is left to linger on the ear like a solemn hymn, in which the little that is mournful only heightens the majestic sweetness of all that is musical. The dramatic art in the several scenes of this play, Sophocles has never excelled and scarcely equalled. The contrast of character in Ulysses and Neoptolemus has in it a reality, a human strength and truth, that is more common to the modern than the ancient drama. But still the fault of the story is partly that the plot rests upon a base and ignoble fraud, and priincipally that our pity is appealed to by the coarse sympathy with physical pain: the rags that covered the sores, the tainted corruption of the ulcers, are brought to bear, not so much on the mind, as on the nerves; and when the hero is represented as shrinking with corporeal agony —the blood oozing from his foot, the livid sweat rolling down the brow—we sicken and turn away from the spectacle; we have no longer that *pleasure* in our own pain which ought to be the characteristic of true tragedy. It is idle to vindicate this error by any dissimilarity between ancient and modern dramatic art. As Nature, so Art, always has some universal and permanent laws. Longinus rightly considers pathos a part of the sublime, for pity ought to elevate us; but there is nothing to elevate us in the noisome wounds, even of a mythical hero; our human nature is too much forced back into itself—and a proof that in this the ancient art did not differ from the modern, is in the exceeding rarity with which bodily pain is made the instrument of compassion with the Greek tragedians. The Philoctetes and the Hercules are among the exceptions that prove the rule.*

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* That the catastrophe should be unhappy!

Aristot. Poet. xiii.

In the same chapter Aristotle properly places in the second rank of fable those tragedies, which attempt the trite and puerile moral of punishing the bad and rewarding the good.

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* When Aristophanes (in the character of Æschylus) ridicules Euripides for the vulgarity of deriving pathos from the rags, &c. of his heroes, he ought not to have omitted all

BOOK V. CHAP. IV.

XII. Another drawback to our admiration of the Philoctetes is in the comparison it involuntarily courts with the Prometheus of Æschylus. Both are examples of fortitude under suffering—of the mind's conflict with its fate. In either play a dreary waste, a savage solitude, constitute the scene. But the towering sublimity of the Prometheus dwarfs into littleness every image of hero or demi-god with which we contrast it. What are the Chorus of mariners, and the astute Ulysses, and the boyish generosity of Neoptolemus—what is the lonely cave on the shores of Lemnos—what the high-hearted old warrior, with his torturing wound, and his sacred bow,—what are all these to the vast Titan, whom the fiends chain to the rock beneath which roll the Rivers of Hell, for whom the Daughters of Ocean are ministers, to whose primæval birth the Gods of Olympus are the upstarts of a day, whose soul is the treasure-house of a secret which threatens the realm of heaven, and for whose unimaginable doom Earth reels to its base, all the might of Divinity is put forth, and Hades itself trembles

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censure of the rags and sores of the favourite hero of Sophocles. And if the Telephus of the first is represented as a beggar, so also is the Œdipus at Colonos of the latter. Euripides has great faults, but he has been unfairly treated both by ancient and modern hypercriticism.

as it receives its indomitable and awful guest! Yet, as I have before intimated, it is the very grandeur of Æschylus that must have made his poems less attractive on the stage than those of the humane and flexile Sophocles. No visible representation can body forth his thoughts—they overpower the imagination, but they do not come home to our household and familiar feelings. In the contrast between the 'Philoctetes' and the 'Prometheus' is condensed the contrast between Æschylus and Sophocles. They are both poets of the highest conceivable order; but the one seems almost above appeal to our affections—his tempestuous gloom appals the imagination, the vivid glare of his thoughts pierces the innermost recesses of the intellect, but it is only by accident that he strikes upon the heart. The other, in his grandest flights, remembers that men make his audience, and seems to feel as if Art lost the breath of its life, when aspiring beyond the atmosphere of human intellect, and human passions. The difference between the creations of Æschylus and Sophocles is like the difference between the Satan of Milton and the Macbeth of Shakspeare. Æschylus is equally artful with Sophocles—it is the criticism of ignorance that has said otherwise. But there is this wide distinction—Æschylus is artful as a dramatist to be read, Sophocles as a dramatist to be acted. If we get rid of actors, and stage, and audience, Æschylus will thrill and move us no less than Sophocles, through a more intellectual if less passionate medium. A poem may be dramatic, yet not theatrical—may have all the effects of the drama in perusal, but by not sufficiently enlisting the skill of the actor—nay, by soaring beyond the highest reach of histrionic capacities, may lose those effects in representation. The storm in 'Lear' is a highly dramatic agency, when our imagination is left free to conjure up the angry elements,

> "Bid the winds blow the earth into the sea,
> Or swell the curled waters."

But a storm on the stage, instead of exceeding, so poorly mimics, the reality, that it can never realise the effect which the poet designs, and with which the reader is impressed. So is it with supernatural and fanciful creations, especially of the more delicate and subtle kind. The Ariel of the 'Tempest,' the Fairies of the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and the Oceanides of the 'Prometheus,' are not to be represented by human shapes. We cannot say that they are not dramatic, but they are not theatrical. We can sympathise with the poet, but not with the actor. For the same reason, in a lesser degree, all creations of human character, that very highly task the imagination, that lift the reader wholly out of actual experience, and above the common earth, are comparatively feeble when reduced to visible forms. The most metaphysical plays of Shakspeare are the least popular in representation. Thus the very genius of Æschylus, that kindles us in the closet, must often have militated against him on the stage. But in Sophocles all—even the Divinities themselves—are touched with humanity; they are not too subtle or too lofty to be submitted to mortal gaze. We feel at once that on the stage Sophocles ought to have won the prize from Æschylus; and, as a proof of this, if we look at the plays of each we see that scarcely any of the great characters of Æschylus could have called into sufficient exercise the powers of an actor. Prometheus on his rock, never changing even his position, never absent from the scene, is denied all the relief, the play and mobility, that an actor needs. His earthly representative could be but a grand reciter. In the "Persians" not only the theatrical but the dramatic effect is wanting—it is splendid poetry put into various mouths, but there is no collision of passions, no surprise, no incident, no plot, no rapid dialogue in which words are but the types of emotions. In the 'Suppliants' Garrick could have made nothing of Pelasgus. In the 'Seven before Thebes,' there are not above twenty or thirty lines assigned to the part of Eteocles in which the art of the actor could greatly assist the genius of the poet. In the trilogy of the 'Agamemnon,' the 'Choephori,' and the 'Orestes,' written in advanced years, we may trace the contagious innovation of Sophocles; but still, even in these tragedies, there is no part so effective in representation as those afforded by the great characters of Sophocles. In the first play, the hypocrisy and power of Clytemnestra would, it is true, have partially required and elicited the talents of the player; but Agamemnon himself is but a thing of pageant, and the splendid bursts of Cassandra might have been effectively uttered by a very inferior histrionic artist. In the second play, in the scene between Orestes and his mother, and in the gathering madness of Orestes, the art of the poet would unquestionably task to the utmost the skill of the performer. But in the last play, (the Furies,) perhaps the sublimest poem of the three, which opens so grandly with the parricide at the sanctuary, and the Furies sleeping around him, there is not one scene from the beginning to the end, in which an eminent actor could exhibit his genius.

But when we come to the plays of Sophocles, we feel that a new era in the drama is created, we feel that the artist poet has called into full existence the artist actor. His theatrical effects* are tangible, actual—could be represented to-morrow in Paris—in London—everywhere. We find, therefore, that with Sophocles has passed down to posterity the name of the great actor† in his principal plays. And I think the English reader, even in the general analysis and occasional translations with which I have ventured to fill so many pages, will perceive that all the exertions of subtle, delicate, and passionate power, even in a modern actor, would be absolutely requisite to do justice to the characters of Œdipus at Colonos, Antigone, Electra, and Philoctetes.

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* The single effects, not the plots.

† "Polus, celebrated," says Gellius, "throughout all Greece, a scientific actor of the noblest tragedies. "Gellius relates of him an anecdote, that when acting the Electra of Sophocles, in that scene where she is represented with the urn, supposed to contain her brother's remains, he brought on the stage the urn and the relics of his own son, so that his lamentations were those of real emotion. Polus acted the hero in the plays of Œdipus Tyrannus and Œdipus at Colonos.—Arrian. ap. Stob. xcvii. 28.—The actors were no less important personages on the ancient, than they are on the modern stage. Aristotle laments that good poets were betrayed into episodes, or unnecesarily prolonging and adorning parts not wanted in the plot, so as to suit the rival performers.—Arist. de Poet. ix. Precisely what is complained of in the present day. The Attic performers were the best in Greece—all the other states were anxious to engage them, but they were liable to severe penalties if they were absent at the time of the Athenian festivals. (Plut. in Alex.) They were very

This, then, was the distinction between Æschylus and Sophocles—both were artists, as genius always must be, but the art of the latter adapted itself better to representation. And this distinction in art was not caused merely by pre-

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highly remunerated. Polus could earn no less than a talent in two days, (Plut. in Rhet. vit.,) a much larger sum (considering the relative values of money) than any English actor could now obtain for a proportionate period of service. Though, in the time of Aristotle, actors as a body were not highly respectable, there was nothing derogatory in the profession itself. At an earlier period the high birth of Sophocles and Æschylus did not prevent their performing in their own plays. Actors often took a prominent part in public affairs; and Aristodemus, the player, was sent ambassador to king Philip. So great, indeed, was the importance attached to this actor, that the state took on itself to send ambassadors in his behalf to all the cities in which he had engagements.—Æschin. De Fals. Legat. p. 30—203, ed. Reiske.

cedence in time. Had Æschylus followed Sophocles it would equally have existed;—it was the natural consequence of the distinctions in their genius—the one more sublime, the other more impassioned—the one exalting the imagination, the other appealing to the heart. Æschylus is the Michael Angelo of the drama, Sophocles the Raffaele.

XIII. Thus have I presented to the general reader the outline of all the remaining tragedies of Sophocles. In the great length at which I have entered in this, not the least difficult, part of my general task, I have widely innovated on the plan pursued by the writers of Grecian history. For this innovation I offer no excuse. It is her poetry at the period we now examine, as her philosophy in a later time, that makes the *individuality* of Athens. In Sophocles we behold the age of Pericles. The wars of that brilliant day were as pastimes to the mighty carnage of oriental or northern battle. The reduction of a single town, which, in our time, that has no Sophocles, and no Pericles, a captain of artillery would demolish in a week, was the proudest exploit of the Olympian of the Agora;—a little while, and one defeat wrests the diadem of the seas from the brows of 'The Violet Queen;'—scanty indeed the ruins that attest the glories of "The Propylæa, the Parthenon, the Porticoes, and the Docks," to which the eloquent orator appealed as the 'indestructible possessions' of Athens;—along the desolate site of the once tumultuous Agora the peasant drives his oxen — the champion-deity* of Phidias, whose spectral apparition daunted the Barbarian Alaric,† and the gleam of whose spear gladdened the mariner beneath the heights of Sunium, has vanished from the Acropolis: but, happily, the Age of Pericles has its stamp and effigy in an art more imperishable than that of war—in materials more durable than those of bronze and marble, of ivory and gold. In the majestic harmony, the symmetrical grace, of Sophocles, we survey the true portraiture of the genius of the times, and the old man of Colonos still celebrates the name of Athens in a sweeter song than that of the nightingale,‡—and in melodies that have survived the muses of Cephisus.§ Sophocles was allegorically the prophet when he declared that in the grave of Œdipus was to be found the sacred guardian and the everlasting defence of the city of Theseus.

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* The Minerva *Promachus.* ἡ μεγαλη Αθηνᾶ.

† Zosimus, v. p. 294.

‡ Œdip. Colon. 671, &c.

§ Ibid. line 691.

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